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A

DISSERTATION

BY WAY OF

INQUIRY INTO THE TRUE IMPORT

AND APPLICATION OF THE VISION

Related DAN. IX. ver. 20. to the end, uſually called,

DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS.

With ſome OCCASIONAL REMARKS on the very learned Profeſſor J. D. MICHAELIS's Letters to Sir JOHN PRINGLE on the ſame Subject.

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UNDERSTAND THE MATTER, AND CONSIDER THE VISION. ver. 23.

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TO

THE HONOURABLE

AND RIGHT REVEREND

SHUTE LORD BISHOP OF *LANDAFF*,

THIS DISSERTATION,

DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE

A CELEBRATED BUT DIFFICULT

PROPHECY

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHOR'S

MOST DUTIFUL ATTACHMENT

AND

MOST GRATEFUL RESPECT.

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Diſſertation hath been encouraged by thoſe, of whoſe judgment he hath a far better opinion than he hath of his own, to ſubmit to the public his attempt towards the explication of a prophecy, which hath long been looked upon as very obſcure and intereſting; but this he could not prevail upon himſelf to do, without making known at the ſame time how his thoughts came to be turned in ſuch a new and particular direction, and of what aſſiſtance he hath availed himſelf in the further proſecution of his inquiry. —*My very learned and reſpectable friend, and predeceſſor in this College, now Biſhop of* DROMORE, *to whom at his requeſt I had ſent an extract of the eight laſt verſes of the Ninth chapter of Daniel, from the ancient verſion of the* Seventy, *lately diſcovered and publiſhed at Rome, moſt obligingly returned his acknowledgments with the following ingenious remarks.* "*The numbers which* "*in this verſion are found different from thoſe in the* "*common text,*" *he thinks,* "*may be thus accounted for.*
"*Seventy weeks add ſeven weeks are* 539 *years. Now*
"*Cyrus's decree according to all the Chronologers was*
"*iſſued* 536 *years before Chriſt; and if we reckon by*
"*hebdomads of years, we cannot come nearer to Chriſt's*
"*birth. Add to the ſixty two years (mentioned ver.* 26.

"*and*

"*and* 27. *in this Greek verſion) the ſurplus of three*
"*years in the period of ſeventy ſeven weeks, and you*
"*have the year LXV after Chriſt, the year immedi-*
"*ately preceding the Jewiſh war. This too is called*
"*Chriſt's coming,* Matt. xvi. 28. xxiv. 3. &c.
"*Thus the period of weeks refers to the birth of Chriſt*
"*with a ſufficient exactneſs for prophetical language;*
"*and that of years marks his coming in another ſenſe*
"*with hiſtorical preciſion.*" *But* "*to make the* 24*th*
"*verſe conſiſtent with this interpretation,*" *he ſuppoſes*
that "*we ought to render inſtead of* ſeventy weeks, (weeks
"weeks) many weeks;" *by which he ſeems ſo far to*
fall in with the common opinion, as to underſtand theſe
weeks not to be a diſtinct period, according to my notion
of the matter, but one and the ſame with thoſe after-
wards mentioned en detail. *He likewiſe adds, that*
"לרבים *ver.* 27. *ſhould in his opinion be tranſlated,*
"to the mighty, *meaning the Romans combined againſt*
"*Jeruſalem.* And he (Titus, the prince who was to
"come, *ver.* 26.) ſhall confirm the league to the migh-
"ty for one week. *The war laſted ſeven years, and*
"*may have begun in October LXVI.* (See Michaelis's
"letters p. 176.) *Thus the year of our Lord LXX,*
"*when the city was deſtroyed, and the ſacrifice ceaſed,*
"*was the middle year of the week.*" *In a ſubſequent*
Letter his Lordſhip agrees in correcting a miſtake, which
I had obſerved to him, and which he had haſtily made,
in ſuppoſing the birth of Chriſt to be coincident with the
beginning of the common Chriſtian æra; and candidly
owns, that the interpretation he had offered was by no
means ſatisfactory to him, but thrown out by way of
trial

trial what could be made of the new principles furniſhed by the newly edited verſion. Whether his judgment will any more approve of the ſuperſtructure, which I have ventured to build nearly upon the ſame principles, and in conſequence of the hints originally ſtarted by him, though purſued ſomewhat differently, I cannot yet ſay; but ſhould have accounted it a felicity to have had him nearer at hand, where I could have laid the whole plan before him, and taken the benefit of his advice, with more eaſe and convenience before publication — Soon after the receipt of the Biſhop's firſt letter beforementioned, I procured Profeſſor Michaelis's *Letters to* Sir John Pringle, *to which I was referred by his Lordſhip, and read them with ſuch attention, as the works of that excellent Critic always command. I here beg leave to profeſs the higheſt veneration and reſpect for his uncommon erudition and great abilities; and how widely ſoever I may ſeem to differ from him in the main as to the interpretation of this prophecy, I freely and cheerfully own myſelf indebted to him for a great deal of light he has thrown upon the ſubject by many judicious and well approved obſervations. I hope he will excuſe the freedom I have taken of calling in queſtion ſome of his opinions, which I could not poſſibly acquieſce in; and ſhall be obliged to him if he will condeſcend to ſet me right in any point, where I myſelf may have committed miſtakes. For as the diſcovery of truth is the object, which both of us (if I may be allowed to rank myſelf in company with ſo great a man) have in view; ſo a friendly colliſion of differing judgments I take to be the moſt likely means of ſtriking it out in the end — With reſpect to the various readings I have made uſe of, ſuch of them as were near*

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at hand I have collated myſelf; for the reſt I am indebted to the friendſhip of Dr Kennicott, *who kindly communicated them to me. It is with pleaſure I announce to the public, that the Doctor's celebrated and elaborate work has been for ſome time in the preſs, and is now in great forwardneſs; and I make no doubt but that it will anſwer the high expectations, which have been entertained both at home and abroad of its accuracy and extenſive utility — At preſent I imagine no apology will be thought needful for my having ſuppoſed the poſſibility of errors exiſting in the modern Hebrew text; ſince the prejudices, which once ſo unaccountably prevailed in favour of its abſolute integrity, ſeem to be dying away apace before that conviction, which muſt neceſſarily ariſe from the diſcovery of numberleſs various readings in the Manuſcripts and Verſions of great antiquity, whereby the ſenſe hath been improved, and the objections cut off, of which infidelity hath but too often availed itſelf for the diſparaging of ſacred Writ.*

HERT. COLL. *Dec.* 2. 1774.

A DISSERTATION BY WAY OF INQUIRY into the true import and application of the Viſion related in the Ninth Chapter of *Daniel*, from ver. 20. to the end, uſually called, DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS.

WE are told by St. *Peter*, that *no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation*[a]; by which, I think, he evidently meant, that no man whatever is of capacity to explain it at his own pleaſure, but muſt wait till ſuch time as the Spirit of God, the author of prophecy, ſhall think fit to reveal it to him. Accordingly many of the ancient Prophets themſelves, we are aſſured, underſtood not the import of the things which they delivered[b]. Thus Daniel, ch. xii. having related the

[a] 2 Pet. i. 20. [b] 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

particulars of an extraordinary viſion, expreſsly declares, ver. 8. that *he heard, but underſtood not*; and proceeding to inquire farther of the Angel who converſed with him, he was ſtopped by the following reply, ver. 9. *Go thy way, Daniel*; *for the words are cloſed up and ſealed till the time of the end.* It was not ſo however with the prophecy which is intended for the ſubject of our preſent inquiry; where an Angel was diſpatched from heaven with a ſpecial commiſſion *to give him ſkill and underſtanding*[a], and he is with authority admoniſhed to *underſtand the matter, and conſider the Viſion*[b]. It might naturally have been expected, that what was ſo clearly revealed to the prophet himſelf, would have been as intelligible to others alſo, who received it from him in the ſelfsame terms in which the Angel announced it. But the fact is otherwiſe; for whatever the Jews of earlier ages may have thought of the prediction, it is very certain of thoſe who lived near the times marked out for it's accompliſhment, and ſtill more ſo of the modern ones, that they are very much in the dark, and altogether inconſiſtent and wide of the truth in their attempts to explain it. Nor indeed do the Chriſtians themſelves appear much more enlightened in the matter, if we may judge from the various modes of interpretation, which at different times have been offered, and the many difficulties and doubts, with which all

[a] Dan. ix. 21, 22. [b] ver. 23.

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in their turn have been reſpectively incumbered. It will not, I hope, be thought preſumptuous or improper in me, if I attempt to throw ſome farther light upon the ſubject; and after a brief notice of the principal objections that occur to the modes of interpretation moſt generally received, endeavour to point out the main ſource of theſe difficulties, and to obviate them by a new method of ſolution, more conſiſtent with itſelf, and leſs liable to exception than any that have preceded.

THE viſion, according to the preſent tranſlation of our Bibles, is repreſented at the 24th and following verſes in theſe words:

v. 24. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy, and to anoint the moſt holy.*

v. 25. *Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem unto the Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks; the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

v. 26. *And after threeſcore and two weeks ſhall Meſſiah be cut off, but not for himſelf; and the people*

of the prince that ſhall come ſhall deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary; and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined.

v. 27. *And he ſhall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe; and for the overſpreading of abominations he ſhall make it deſolate, even until the conſummation, and that determined, ſhall be poured upon the deſolate.*

The opinion moſt commonly entertained, among Chriſtians at leaſt, concerning this prophecy on the whole, is, that it is a prediction of the death of our bleſſed Saviour, deſcriptive of ſome of the moſt material circumſtances, effects, and conſequences of it; and that the ſeventy weeks, preſumed to be ſpoken of at the beginning of the twenty fourth verſe, conſtitute a period, which terminates in or about the time of our Saviour's ſuffering. Now to this interpretation one very obvious and conſiderable objection preſents itſelf at once, namely, that though the commandment is ſaid, ver. 23. to have gone forth in conſequence of Daniel's ſupplication, very little or no regard is paid either to the occaſion or ſubject matter of his prayer. The occaſion of it is thus ſet forth in the beginning of the chapter; that Daniel, having conſidered *the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accompliſh ſeventy years in*

in the deſolations of Jeruſalem, and having found that the term was near expiring, had *ſet his face unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſting, and ſackloth, and aſhes* [a]. Accordingly the ſubſtance of his prayer was, after a devout acknowledgement of God's righteouſneſs in puniſhing the iniquity of his people, as he had threatened, to intreat him to extend his mercy to them likewiſe agreeably to his promiſe, to take them again into favour, and to reſtore them to their country, and the free exerciſe of their moſt holy religion. But what was the reply? Inſtead of a comfortable aſſurance that God would confirm his word, as indeed he was about to do, in the reſtoration of his people, the petitioner is informed of an event, very conſiderable indeed in itſelf, but not much to the matter of his petition; namely, that the Meſſiah ſhould be put to death for the ſins of mankind; and that in conſequence thereof the city (of which he is told by the bye, as it were, that it ſhould be rebuilt in the interval) ſhould after a while be deſtroyed, and the Jewiſh nation and religion be finally put an end to. Such was the petition, and ſuch the anſwer; and though I do not deny that where one thing is aſked, providence may think proper to anſwer the petitioner with another; the preſumption however, I conceive, *cæteris paribus*, will always be in favour of a reply that falls in with the ſubject of petition.

[a] Dan. ix. 2, 3, &c.

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A SECOND objection lies againſt the time from which the period ſpecified in the prophecy is underſtood to take it's commencement. This by ſome has been reckoned from the ſeventh, by others from the twentieth year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*; the former being the year in which Ezra was ſent to regulate the affairs of Jeruſalem [a]; the latter that in which Nehemiah obtained a commiſſion to repair the walls of the city [b]. But can any better reaſon be aſſigned for fixing on either of theſe dates, than that they favour an hypotheſis already formed, by terminating, though after a different mode of computation, in or about the time of our Saviour's paſſion? But if the circumſtances of the caſe be attended to, will it not appear infinitely more probable, that the decree here ſpoken of muſt be that of *Cyrus*, of whom it had been propheſied long before by *Iſaiah*, ch. XLIV. 28. that *he ſhould ſay to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation ſhall be laid.* And again in the following chapter, ver. 13. *He ſhall build my city, and he ſhall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, ſaith the Lord of hoſts?* Is it likely then that the decree of this *Cyrus*, ſo long celebrated beforehand, this primary and fundamental decree, which took place exactly at the expiration of the ſeventy years captivity, within a few months after this prophecy was given, and produced ſuch a total alteration at once in the con-

[a] Ezra vii. 1, &c. [b] Neh. ii. 1, &c.

dition

dition of the people and the face of their country; is it likely, I ſay, that this decree ſhould be overlooked, and the preference given to another at the diſtance of eighty or ninety years, and one of ſecondary conſideration only, whether we conſider it's importance in itſelf, or it's being only grafted on the former, as a ſubſequent ratification and confirmation of it? Certainly neither Daniel himſelf, when he ſaw the firſt decree iſſued, and the effects of it, could have any doubt whether it was that, of which he had been before apprized; nor could the reſt of his countrymen, who lived to ſee the other decrees that came forth in the ſucceeding reigns, have been at any loſs to determine between them, from whence the date of their future fortunes was to be calculated.

But thirdly, another obvious objection ariſes from the ſuppoſed diviſion of the term of ſeventy weeks, ſpecified in the groſs at ver. 24, into diſtinct and ſeparate periods, terminating in ſeven weeks, ſixty two weeks, and one week, of which particular mention is made in the 25th and following verſes. Now this diviſion, if made with any other end than to amuſe, (an end which cannot be imputed without derogating from the wiſdom of God's providence) ought, it ſhould ſeem, to mark out periods naturally diſtinguiſhed by ſome extraordinary and remarkable occurrences. But whether we reckon from the ſeventh, or from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, it doth not appear that

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the fortyninth year from that date, or any one near it, was at all ſignalized for any notable event, either reſpecting the Jewiſh hiſtory, or the general hiſtory of mankind. It belongs therefore to thoſe, who interpret the prophecy conformably to either of thoſe dates, to ſhew that this firſt period of ſeven weeks, or forty nine years, did actually terminate in ſome ſuch ſingular event; or otherwiſe at leaſt to aſſign ſome probable reaſon, (which, if not before, yet after the accompliſhment may very fairly be expected) why that particular period ſhould have been pitched upon by God in preference to any other part of the interval, where a more ſignal termination might have proportionably contributed to a more ſtriking diſplay of his foreſight and providence.*

With reſpect to the remaining periods other difficulties alſo remain to be adjuſted, but different ac-

* Dr Prideaux in his *Script. Connect.* P. i. B. 5. hath laboured to prove, that what is ſaid of *reſtoring and building Jeruſalem*, v. 25. was meant figuratively of a reformation and reſettlement of the Jewiſh Church and State according to the Law of Moſes. Upon this footing indeed he hath fixed on a very plauſible termination of the firſt period, by making this work of reformation to have laſted the whole forty nine years, having been firſt ſet on foot by Ezra, and at length completed by Nehemiah in the fortyninth year. But beſides the difficulty of proving that Nehemiah's adminiſtration extended to this date, which is much diſputed; the ground work of the hypotheſis, which reſts on the figurative ſenſe, is very improbable, and ſurely ought never to be admitted in any caſe, where a fair and reaſonable ſolution of the matter can be given according to the proper and literal ſenſe.

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cording to the different hypotheſes which have been framed in ſucceſſion, in order to get clear of the objections which embarraſſed the preceding ones. The moſt conſiderable of theſe hypotheſes with their objections reſpectively are as follow. There are ſome who calculate the ſecond period of threeſcore and two weeks ſo as to end in or about the twentyninth year of the Chriſtian æra, when our Lord entered upon his public miniſtry; and from thence proceed to compute the laſt week of ſeven years ſo, as that the middle of the week may coincide with the time of our Saviour's death; by which great offering of himſelf once for all he took away the obligation and efficacy of all future ſacrifices *. On this ſuppoſition indeed the words of the prophecy may ſeem to have been punctually fulfilled, *in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe*. But how then can he be ſaid to have *confirmed the covenant*, by which the goſpel covenant is underſtood, *with many for one week*, when

* Petavius and Archbiſhop Uſher have both followed this mode of computation, beginning to reckon the firſt period from the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which they place in the 4259th and 4260th (the one ending, the other beginning) year of the Julian Period, that is, the 455th and 454th before the Chriſtian æra; ſo that adding 69 weeks, or 483 years, the ſum of the two firſt periods taken together, we ſhall arrive at the 4742d or 4743d year of the Julian Period, that is, the year of our Lord xxix, or xxx, for the concluſion of the ſecond period. See *Petavii Rationar. tempor.* P. ii. lib. iii. cap. 10. and *Uſſerii Annal.* Ann. P. Jul. 4260.

his miniſtry laſted by confeſſion no more than the half of it. Nor will it leſſen the difficulty to allege, that the ſame covenant continued to be promulged by his diſciples after his death for the remainder of the term. It did ſo indeed; but not for one week only, but for many more in ſucceſſion; whereas the conſtruction of the words neceſſarily implies an action, of which the duration was limited to one week only.—Others again propoſe to finiſh the ſecond period, and begin the third a little earlier, namely in the year of our Lord XXVI, when *the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias in the wilderneſs* *. And here too the prophecy will appear to have had it's accompliſhment in one part, in that during the interval of a week or ſeven years from this time to the year XXXIII, in which our Lord ſuffered, the goſpel *Covenant* was indeed *confirmed*, partly by the preaching of his forerunner John the Baptiſt, and partly by his own perſonal miniſtry, to as *many* as were willing to comply with

* Luk. iii. 1. 2. This is the opinion which Dr Prideaux has maintained in oppoſition to the preceding one. For this purpoſe he begins to compute the firſt period from the 7th year of Artaxerxes, which according to the ancient Chronologers was the 4256th of the Julian Period, or the 458th before Chriſt. Add 483 years to this, and we are brought to the 4739th year of the Julian Period, or the 26th of the Chriſtian æra, which correſponds with the fifteenth year of Tiberius, reckoned from the time when he was admitted to a copartnerſhip in the empire with Auguſtus, and fixed by the Evangeliſt for the date of John the Baptiſt's firſt public appearance. See Prideaux *Script. Connect.* P. i. B. 5.

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the terms of it. But the plauſibility of this hypotheſis is again overturned by the words next in ſucceſſion, which require alſo, that *in the midſt of the week he ſhould cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe*. For allowing the abovementioned conſtruction to be put upon theſe words, that by the death of Chriſt the obligation of the legal ſacrifices was *virtually* at an end, (for it is certain they did not *actually* ceaſe till many years after) yet even upon this conceſſion muſt it not ſound harſh to affirm a thing to have happened *in the midſt of the week*, which did not take place till the very cloſe and expiration of it?—And beſides the difficulties, which thus alternately affect each of theſe hypotheſes, there is ſtill another behind which is common to both. For it is not eaſy to conceive, how the two circumſtances juſt now alluded to, which are predicted to happen in the courſe of the laſt week, and are thereby appropriated to the time of our Saviour's death, at leaſt according to the opinions we are now ſpeaking of, came to be blended with and interpoſed between thoſe, which evidently relate to the deſtruction of the Jewiſh city and temple, and of courſe came not to paſs till many years after.—Nor will the caſe be much improved by a third hypotheſis; which aſſuming a ſeries of ſhorter, that is, *Chaldaic* years, of 360 days each, brings down the ſecond period only to the death of Chriſt; after which, admitting a conſiderable interval, it begins again to

reckon the laſt week a few years before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, ſo as finally to terminate in that cataſtrophe*. By this means indeed it muſt be confeſſed,

* This hypotheſis acknowledgeth Biſhop Lloyd for it's author, and is repreſented in the 3d and 4th of the Chronological Tables compiled and publiſhed by Mr Marſhal, his Lordſhip's Chaplain, who hath alſo explained it more at large in a treatiſe of his own upon the ſubject. In it the firſt period is dated from the commiſſion granted to Nehemiah in or about the month Niſan (that is, April) of the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which is taken according to the old Chronology for the 4269th of the Julian Period, anſwering to the 445th before the vulgar Chriſtian æra. From this date if we reckon ſeven weeks and threeſcore and two weeks of, that is, in all 483, Chaldaic years, which are equivalent to 476 Julian years, and ſome days over, the ſecond period will end in the 4745th year of the Julian Period, or the year of our Lord XXXII, and about the month of May, or not long after; at the paſſover next after which, within the ſpace of a year, our Saviour was crucified. The third and laſt period of a ſingle week, or ſeven years, is made to commence about September in the year of our Lord LXIII, when the Romans made a treaty of peace with the Parthians and others; and Jeruſalem was taken in September of the year of our Lord LXX. Beſides the objection to this hypotheſis noticed in the text, two others deſerve remarking; the one, that though a pretty plain diſtinction ſeems to be made between the time of the Meſſiah's appearance, v. 25. and *the cutting off*, which is ſaid to be *after the threeſcore and two weeks*, v. 26. yet in this hypotheſis both are confounded together, as if *unto the Meſſiah the Prince*, and to his death, meant the ſame thing. The other objection is the ſame that occurs to the preceding hypotheſis, namely, that *the ceſſation of the ſacrifice and oblation*, which is here underſtood of the *actual* ceſſation of them, did not take place till toward the extremity of the laſt or ſeventh year; whereas it was predicted to happen *in the midſt*, or, if you pleaſe, *the half of the week*. See what is farther ſaid upon this point hereafter when we come to examine this paragraph, ver. 26.

that

that both *the confirmation of the covenant with many for one week*, and *the abolition of the ſacrifices in the midſt of that week*, may with a much greater degree of plauſibility be reconciled and accounted for. But not to inſiſt on the ſeveral objections that occur in other particulars, the breaking of the line of time, on which the whole ſtreſs of this hypotheſis lies, muſt of itſelf appear in the higheſt degree exceptionable. For either the limitation of a number of years in a prediction ſuppoſes thoſe years to follow in continued ſucceſſion, or it is in effect no limitation at all, nor of any uſe to aſcertain the preciſe time of the event. On the contrary, how eaſily may the very ſame date be accommodated to the moſt diſtant periods imaginable, provided it be allowable to diſcontinue the reckoning at pleaſure, and to reſume it again, juſt where it may ſuit the turn of a fancied hypotheſis? So that whoever conſiders the difficulties that preſent themſelves at every turning, and what contradictions have reſulted even on the footing of the faireſt conjectures that have hitherto been ſtarted, will ſee reaſon enough to conclude, that all thoſe conjectures have as yet fallen at a diſtance from the truth, whatever may have been the occaſion and ground of the error. To diſcover and remove this is the object at preſent propoſed, by a careful and candid examination of the matter in the order it lies before us.

To

To begin then with the 24th verſe.

ver. 24. שבעים שבעים נחתך על עמך ועל עיר
קדשך לכלא הפשע ולהתם הטאות ולכפר עון ולהביא
צדק עלמים ולחתם חזון ונביא ולמשח קדש קדשים׃

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy, and to anoint the moſt holy.

The two firſt words of this verſe, which are generally underſtood to ſignify *ſeventy weeks*, are literally the ſame, being diſtinguiſhed only by the points or vowels, which are additions without authority. And as they are both uniformly written without the *Vau* *, they may with as much propriety be rendered *ſeventy ſeventy*, if the context admit of it; the repetition of the ſame word being often uſed emphatically †.

The next word נחתך, though uſually taken for a verb, cannot poſſibly be ſo without violating a primary

* It muſt not be concealed, that in ſome few MSS. the firſt word is written with the *Vau*, שבועים.

† In one MS. the word שבעים is not repeated, but is found only once.

rule

rule of grammar, in making a ſingular verb to agree with a nominative plural. Beſides, the ſenſe which is given to it, namely, *fated* or *determined*, ſeems to be arbitrary, and authorized only by a ſuppoſed *exigentia loci*. The word itſelf occurs no where elſe throughout the Bible; and as for it's ſuppoſed root חתך, it is very doubtful whether ſuch a one ever exiſted in the Hebrew language. The Greek verſion of *Theodotion*, the Vulgate, and the *Arabic*, verſions ſeem almoſt as arbitrary in rendering the word, *haſtened*, *abbreviated*, *cut ſhort*. The *Syriac* indeed gives a quite different ſignification, *ſhall reſt*, thereby referring it to the verb נוח, which ſignifies *to reſt*; from which etymology a more probable concluſion may be drawn. For if inſtead of a verb we ſuppoſe it to be a noun formed from נחתך, *thy reſt*, or perhaps a corruption of the word נחת, *reſt*, it will then be found to be a term ſynonymous with שבת, *ſabbath*, which is uſed to ſignify the CESSATION or REST of a country, whilſt it continues in a ſtate of deſolation. Thus, Lev. XXVI. 34, 35. it is ſaid, *Then ſhall the land enjoy her* SABBATHS, *as long as it lieth deſolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then ſhall the land* REST, *and enjoy her* SABBATHS; *as long as it lieth deſolate, it ſhall* REST. And again, ver. 43. *The land alſo ſhall be left of them, and ſhall enjoy her* SABBATHS, *while ſhe lieth deſolate without them.* And 2 Chro. XXXVI. 21. the idea is brought home, and immediately applied to the deſolation brought upon Jeruſalem by the King of Babylon,

lon, which is there ſaid *to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her* SABBATHS; *for as long as ſhe lay deſolate, ſhe kept* SABBATH, *to fulfil threeſcore and ten years.* Here then we are furniſhed with a noun, which following the numeral adjective is, according to the ſtricteſt rules of Hebrew grammar, in the ſingular number; and ſince the verb ſubſtantive is underſtood, we are at liberty to ſupply it in ſuch tenſe as the context requires. Inſtead therefore of reading, *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city,* I propoſe to read, *Seventy*, I ſay, *ſeventy years of reſt* (or, *deſolation*) have been *upon thy people and upon thy holy city.* To confirm this interpretation, let us examine whether the ſubſequent members of the verſe have an apt conſiſtency with it.

And firſt, The words לכלא הפשע, which our Tranſlators have rendered, *to finiſh the tranſgreſſion* *, more properly ſignify, *to check or reſtrain the revolt*; for פשע is not a generic term for every tranſgreſſion, but marks that particular ſpecies, which conſiſts in withdrawing the allegiance that is due to a lawful Sovereign. Now God being king in Iſrael, the idola-

* The greater part of the collated MSS. read with the printed Copies לכלא, but in 16 MSS. the reading is לכלה, which is more agreeable to the principal ancient verſions, as well as to our Engliſh one. Upon the whole however, though the ſenſe would not be very different either way, the reading of the printed Copies ſeems preferable.

trous

trous worſhip of other gods, ſo frequently practiſed by that people before the captivity, and for which they were repeatedly threatened with that calamity, was no other than downright rebellion and revolt from the majeſty of him, whoſe throne was in the heavens. But after the return of the Jews from Babylon, we do not find that they ever again relapſed into their former idolatrous courſes. So that thus far the ſeventy years deſolation might properly be ſaid to have been deſigned for the *curbing* and *checking of that revolt*, ſince the end, we ſee, was ſo effectually anſwered by it.

THE next words, לחתם חטאות, in which our preſent Engliſh verſion has adopted the Maſoretic emendation, confirmed by the authority of many ancient Manuſcripts, and of ſeveral of the old verſions, rendering them, *and to make an end of ſins* *; toge-

* Our old Engliſh verſion follows the reading as it now ſtands in the printed Copies, ולחתם הטאות, and renders, *and to ſeale up the ſinnes*, which it thus paraphraſes in the margin, *to ſhew mercie, and to put ſin out of remembrance*; in which ſenſe the ſeal ſhould, methinks, be put either to the deed or inſtrument of pardon, or to the mouth of the accuſer. Others by *ſealing up ſins* underſtand quite differently, to keep them up and reſerve them for future judgment; which is the ſenſe in which the beforementioned verſion paraphraſes the ſame expreſſion, Job xiv. 17. *Mine iniquitie is ſealed up as in a bagge* — that is, ſays the Margin, *Thou layeſt them all together, and ſuffreſt none of my ſinnes unpuniſhed.* Neither of theſe ſenſes do ſo well accord with the context as the Maſoretic reading, ולחתם, which there is other good reaſon alſo to believe the true original one, changed by an eaſy miſtake for ולחתם,

ther with the ſubſequent words, ולכפר עון, *and to expiate* or *make atonement for iniquity*; and thoſe immediately following, ולחביא צדק עלמים, which literally and properly ſignify, *and to bring again the righteouſneſs of ancient times*, meaning that piety and innocence of manners, which uſed formerly to prevail and diſtinguiſh at leaſt the patriarchal ages; all theſe three ſentences, thus linked together, do ſo perfectly correſpond with the deſign of every wiſe and good governor in inflicting puniſhment, that no argument ſeems neceſſary to juſtify their application to that ſevere but wholeſome diſcipline, with which God had been pleaſed to viſit and chaſtiſe his choſen people in the temporary deſolation of their country.

In the words which follow, ולחתם חזון ונביא, our tranſlators have choſen to follow the Vulgate Latin and Arabic verſions, and render them, *and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy*, in preference to the printed Hebrew text, which exhibits ונביא, *and prophet*, and herein has the concurrence of the greater part of, if not all, the collated MSS*, together with the Greek verſions of the Seventy and Theodotion. It is poſſible that thoſe, who firſt adopted the word *prophecy*, might

which word follows preſently after in the ſame verſe, and perhaps might have caught the tranſcriber's eye by ſtanding immediately under the former. N. B. ולהתם is found in 40 MSS. and חטאת for חטאות in 70 MSS.

* In one MS. the *Vau* is omitted before נביא, and in another it is הנביא; but no authority occurs for reading ונבואה, *and prophecy*.

attend

attend only to the primary and moſt obvious uſe of a ſeal, that of cloſing up a letter or writing, in order to keep the contents of it ſecret for a time; and this they might the rather be diſpoſed to do, as the image is manifeſtly thus applied to *a viſion* or *prophecy* twice in the twelfth chapter at the 4th and 9th verſes. Since therefore there was no accommodating a ſeal in this ſenſe to *the prophet* himſelf, they might think themſelves juſtified by the neceſſity of the caſe in correcting a ſuppoſed error by ſubſtituting the thing inſtead of the perſon. But by the annexing of a ſeal another purpoſe, we know, is likewiſe anſwered, namely, that of authenticating the deed or inſtrument to which it is affixed. And thus the ſeventy years deſolation, being the accompliſhment of what had been predicted by the prophet Jeremiah concerning Judah and Jeruſalem, ſerved not only to ſeal or atteſt the truth of the prophecy itſelf, but alſo to aſcertain the ſacred character of the prophet, who uttered it in the name of the Lord *.

I COME now to the laſt member of the verſe, ולמשח קדש קדשים, *and to anoint the moſt holy*, or *holy of holies*; by which it is uſual to underſtand the

* Thus Chriſt is ſaid to have been *ſealed by God the father*, when by the miracles which he wrought his divine miſſion was fully authenticated; John vi. 27. and thus Chriſtians were *ſealed by having the earneſt of the ſpirit given them in their hearts*, atteſting and ſhewing to whom they belonged. 2 Cor. i. 22.

conſecrating of the Meſſiah, that is, the Chriſt, or anointed, to his ſacred office. But how plauſible ſoever this may appear, when the words are taken by themſelves, they cannot be ſo underſtood, when applied to the context, unleſs it be made appear that Chriſt was actually conſecrated to, or entered upon, his office within the time ſpecified. But that is impoſſible, even upon the moſt favourable ſuppoſition of ſeventy weeks of proſperity, inſtead of ſo many years of deſolation, without aſſuming an arbitrary and improbable date to begin from. But the words קדש קדשים are, I believe, conſtantly applied in the old teſtament not to perſons, but to things, to the temple or ſanctuary itſelf, the altar, veſſels, and utenſils belonging to the temple, together with the offerings, and other appurtenances of the temple worſhip; and it was by the ceremony of anointing that theſe things were directed to be cleanſed and ſanctified [a], ſo as to be fitted to appear in the preſence of that pure and holy Being, to whom this worſhip was directed. On the other hand we are likewiſe told, that by the ſins and tranſgreſſions of the people, and particularly by their idolatries, all theſe things were polluted and made common [a], and inſtead of remaining moſt holy unto the Lord, were rendered abominable and offenſive in his ſight [b]. If therefore the puniſhment inflicted on the Jews proved the means of recovering

[a] Exod. xxx. 25——29.
[b] Ezek. xxiii. 38, 39.
[c] Prov. xv. 8. Lam. ii. 7.

them

them from their backſlidings and idolatry, of expiating their iniquity, and working in them a thorough reformation and amendment, it would of courſe be a means of reſtoring them to the divine favour, and conſequently would render both the place and inſtruments of their worſhip once more acceptable unto God, by cleanſing them from the defilements they had before contracted. And this therefore might juſtly be ſtiled in metaphorical language, which is the language of prophecy, an *anointing*, or ſanctifying anew, *of their moſt holy things*.

Before we proceed farther, let us recapitulate what has been ſaid, and cloſe our obſervations upon this verſe. By the interpretation here offered we find one of the principal objections obviated, which lay to former ſolutions; for we have now a reply directly to the matter and occaſion of the prophet Daniel's prayer. It was no other than the ſeventy years deſolation, as foretold by Jeremiah, which had exerciſed his thoughts, and put him upon making his addreſs to God. He had acknowledged the manifold and great provocations of his countrymen, and pathetically deſcribed and lamented the miſeries that had enſued; intreating the Lord at length to turn from the fierceneſs of his wrath, to pardon and reſtore again to favour his once loved people, and to repair the breaches that had been made in his ſanctuary, and in the city that was called by his holy name.

name. His prayer was heard; and the Angel was commiſſioned to ſhew him, that the late judgments, which had befallen his people, were not intended for their final deſtruction, but as a merciful viſitation to correct their enormities, and to bring about the ſalutary purpoſes of reformation; conſequently, when the time deſtined for theſe purpoſes ſhould be completed, and they ſhould be made ſenſible of the hand of God by the full accompliſhment of his predictions, they would then find themſelves again reinſtated in his favour, and in the free exerciſe of their moſt holy religion. What could be more appoſite than this?— Nor is there the leaſt force put either upon the terms, or upon their grammatical conſtruction, to make them ſpeak ſuch a ſenſe: the whole is eaſy and natural. I ſhall therefore take leave to read the 24th verſe according to the following literal tranſlation; *Seventy*, I ſay, *ſeventy years of reſt* (or *deſolation*) have been *upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to check the revolt, and to put an end to ſins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring again the righteouſneſs of ancient times, and to ſeal* (i. e. authenticate) *the divine oracle, and the prophet,* (who delivered it) *and to anoint* (i. e. ſanctify anew) *the moſt holy things.*

I PROCEED now to conſider the 25th verſe, wherein I think we ſhall ſee pointed out the entire period, in which the Jews continued to enjoy, without any conſiderable interruption at leaſt, the privileges they were

were reſtored to upon the expiration of their captivity, together with the moſt intereſting occurrences of that period.

ver. 25. ותרע ותשכל מן מצא דבר להשיב ולבנות
ירושלם עד משיח נגיד שבעים שבעה ושבעים ששים
ושנים תשוב ונבנתה רחוב וחרוץ ובצוק העתים׃

Know therefore and underſtand, that from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem unto the Meſſiah the prince ſhall be ſeven weeks and threeſcore and two weeks; the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

The Angel having accounted, as we have already ſeen, for the events that were paſt, begins now to foretel future ones after the following manner; *And thou ſhalt know and underſtand, that from the going forth of a decree to rebuild Jeruſalem*—Thus far with reſpect to the tranſlation I apprehend there will be little or no controverſy; for though ſome of the Greek verſions exhibit a different ſenſe of the words להשיב ולבנות, which are here rendered, *to rebuild*, no man who is at all verſed in Hebrew will deny, that by the idiom of that language the verb שוב, in conſtruction with another verb, denotes a repetition of the action expreſſed by the latter verb. Accordingly our tranſlators, who in the text had cloſely followed the Hebrew

Hebrew idiom, and rendered, *to reſtore and to build*, have in the margin given a more liberal turn to the phraſe, viz. *to build again*; and preſently after in this ſame verſe have done the like in the text itſelf, where what we read, *the ſtreet ſhall be built again*, is in the original, תשוב ונבנתה, *ſhall return and be built*. But the point moſt likely to be conteſted is, what decree or commandment is here deſigned. I ſhall not now repeat what has been before urged againſt the proba-bility of any decree poſterior to that of Cyrus [a], or in favour of taking the date of that decree for the æra, from whence to compute the following times. I ſhall only obſerve, that by the interpretation juſt now propoſed of the 24th verſe the latter hypotheſis is almoſt reduced to a certainty. For granting that in the preceding verſe the ſeventy years deſolation was the ſubject ſpoken of, upon that footing at leaſt it can ſcarcely be imagined, that by *the decree*, ſpecified in the words immediately following to be a decree *for rebuilding Jeruſalem*, any other could be intended than the edict of Cyrus, which, as we are told Ezra i. 1. was iſſued for this very purpoſe, *that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah*, who foretold both the deſolation itſelf, and the time of it's termination, *might be fulfilled* *.

[a] P. 6, 7.

* The learned Profeſſor *Michaelis* (*Epiſt. ad D. I. Pringle*, p. 94.) ſuppoſes the decree here ſpoken of to be no other than the prophecy itſelf, which had juſt proceeded from the mouth of God. On this

THE

The words עד משיח נגיד, which come next in order, are, I think, both rightly tranſlated, *unto the Meſſiah*

ſuppoſition indeed the difference in point of time would be but inconſiderable, as the prophecy preceded the decree of Cyrus but a few months only. But the argument brought in ſupport of this opinion appears not ſufficiently concluſive. He obſerves that at ver. 23. we read, יצא דבר, *the commandment came forth*; from whence he infers the neceſſity of underſtanding מצא דבר, *the going forth of the commandment*, or *decree*, as we render it, ver. 25. to refer preciſely to the ſame thing. Now though it be a very good rule in the general, whereby to judge of the doubtful ſenſe of a term or phraſe, to compare it with the uſe of the ſame term or phraſe by the ſame author, and eſpecially in the neighbouring context, yet it is a rule that will not always hold good. In the 25th verſe the commandment is particularly ſpecified to be *for the rebuilding of Jeruſalem*; but the commandment before ſpoken of at the 23d verſe cannot poſſibly be ſo underſtood. There it is ſaid, *at the beginning of thy ſupplications the commandment came forth*; but if this be God's commandment for rebuilding Jeruſalem, we muſt conclude this to have been the firſt time of his notifying any ſuch purpoſe. And ſo indeed our Author ſeems to ſuppoſe, when he ſays, "precari incipiente Daniele, ſtatim "Deus illa verba, quæ verſu 24 — 27 legimus, in cœlo pronuntiat, ac "tanquam ex fatorum libris recitat." (*Epiſt. ut ſupra* p. 29.) But the fact is otherwiſe; for God had before notified that purpoſe by Iſaiah, as we have already ſeen, and expreſsly named Cyrus for the execution of it. Iſai. xliv. 28. xlv. 13. — If it be asked, To what then do I ſuppoſe the commandment v. 23. to refer, I anſwer, that with the generality of interpreters I underſtand no other by it, than a commiſſion given by God to the angel to go and ſhew Daniel all the following particulars, as a mark of God's ſpecial favour; and this I conceive to be the moſt natural import of the words taken together, *At the beginning of thy ſupplications an order came forth, in purſuance of which I am come to ſhew thee, becauſe thou art greatly beloved of God; therefore attend to the order, and conſider the viſion*, or *revelation*; that is, "underſtand by whoſe

the prince, and alſo rightly referred to the coming of our Saviour; than which no event can poſſibly be conceived more important and intereſting to the Jewiſh nation in general, whether we underſtand his firſt coming to preach to them the goſpel of his kingdom, or his ſecond coming to puniſh their ingratitude and infidelity. Both perhaps may be found to come within

" authority I come, and conſider the import of what is now revealed to " thee." But it is objected, p. 30. that in the narrative not a word is ſaid of any ſuch order; on the contrary the angel pretends to come of his own accord, and from his own particular regard for Daniel. As to the firſt part of the objection, I reply, that when St Luke relates the appearance of the ſame angel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptiſt, ch. i. 11, the Evangeliſt in his own perſon ſays no more, than that *the angel appeared to Zacharias*. But does this imply that he was not ſent? If it does, we muſt diſbelieve the angel himſelf, who ſays afterwards, nearly as he is ſuppoſed to do here, *I am Gabriel, that ſtand in the preſence of God, and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings.* ver. 19. And as to the notion that Gabriel pretends to come purely out of friendſhip and of his own accord, I marvel much whence this can be collected. For whatever idea the Scriptures may give us of the benevolence of the holy angels, they no where, I think, encourage a belief, that theſe bleſſed Spirits ever interfere in human affairs without the Almighty's bidding; but they are ſimply repreſented as the Miniſters of his providence, employed on his behalf, and always attentive to perform his will. Can it then be ſuppoſed, that one of the moſt immediate attendants on the divine preſence would raſhly deſert his poſt, in order to carry an officious piece of intelligence to one upon earth, for which he had no authority or direction from his Superior? — Upon the whole then, the commandment v. 23. does not appear to be a commandment for *rebuilding Jeruſalem*, and conſequently cannot be the ſame with that which is expreſsly determined ſo to be ver. 25; ſo that the argument for concluding both to be the ſame from the ſimilarity of expreſſion, and both to intend the prophecy now before us, of courſe falls to the ground.

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the intention of this prophecy, when we examine the diſtinct periods which are noted by the numbers that follow. At preſent let it ſuffice to obſerve, that the titles here made uſe of are exactly of the ſame import with thoſe given, probably by the ſame angel *, to our Saviour in notifying his birth to the Shepherds. *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is* CHRIST THE LORD [a]. His apoſtles likewiſe ſpeak of him in the ſame terms in their firſt preaching to the Jews after his reſurrection. *God*, ſay they, *hath made this ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, both* LORD *and* CHRIST [b]. And again, *Him hath God exalted to be a* PRINCE *and a Saviour* [c]. The reaſon of theſe titles is ſo very obvious, and both the nature of Chriſt's office, and the authority of his kingdom, are ſo largely ſet forth in Scripture, that it would be needleſs to dwell longer on the ſubject †.

* The name of the angel who appeared to the Shepherds is not mentioned, Luk. ii. 9. but as the angel who was ſent to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary, was Gabriel, Luk. i. 19, 26. it is probable that the ſame was employed on this errand alſo.

[a] Luk. ii. 11. [b] Acts ii. 36. [c] Acts V. 31.

† M. *Michaelis* here conjectures the true reading to have been, עד משיח ונגיד, *unto the Meſſiah* AND *the Prince*, or *General*, meaning by the latter the Roman General Titus. *Epiſt. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 81. But no ſuch reading is countenanced by any of the ancient verſions, or by the collated MSS. Nor do I think the learned Critic himſelf would have entertained any ſuch notion, had he not been miſled by the wrong conſtruction adopted in the 26th verſe, where משיח and נגיד ſeem to be oppoſed, but are not, as will be ſhewn in its proper place. Beſides, with ſubmiſſion to the Profeſſor's judgment, may it not appear an improper violation of the

I come now to the conſideration of that part of the prophecy, which is of the utmoſt nicety and importance in itſelf, and at the ſame time appears moſt intricate and difficult; namely, to ſettle the preciſe numbers here made uſe of, and to adjuſt the periods which are determined by them. It hath already been noticed in part, what hard ſhifts they have been reduced to, and what inextricable difficulties they have at laſt found themſelves involved in, who following the Hebrew text, as it ſtands at preſent in the printed copies, fixed and determined by the Maſoretic vowels, have ſought to accommodate the ſeveral periods to any ſeries of events, which with the leaſt degree of probability could be made to correſpond with the terms and general ſcope of the prediction [a]. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the ſeveral hypotheſes; the moſt probable ones have been before touched upon; but let it ſuffice to ſay in the general, that none has yet been offered, in which a mind, no way given to ſcepticiſm, but only prudently and properly conſiderate, can acquieſce with a ſober and wellgrounded conviction. This, I think, may fairly lead one to ſuſpect, that the preſent reading of the Hebrew copies is not ſuch as it ſhould be, but hath either ſuffered by the miſtakes of

laws of decorum, to have aſſociated together in ſuch a manner, as of equal rank, two perſons, one of whom was confeſſedly of a character infinitely ſuperior to the greateſt earthly monarch?

[a] P. 9 — 13.

tranſcribers

tranſcribers, who have erred in nothing more than in copying numerals; or elſe that it hath been corrupted by the ignorance of thoſe, who have added the vowels injudiciouſly, and, I doubt, have in ſome inſtances been guilty of an encroachment upon the letters themſelves, where a ſmall alteration tallied better with their prejudices and prepoſſeſſions. Certain it is, that the ground of ſuſpicion in the preſent caſe is much confirmed by a view of the different numbers, that are actually found in ſome of the ancient verſions and citations of authors, and alſo in the Hebrew Manuſcripts themſelves, which have of late been collated. In the preſent Hebrew printed copies we read, שבעים שבעה ושבעים ששים ושנים ſhall be *weeks ſeven and weeks threeſcore and two.* But in the Greek verſion of Daniel by the *Seventy*, lately publiſhed from an ancient Manuſcript, long ſought after, and at length happily diſcovered in the *Chigian* Library at *Rome* *, (in which, though there appears much mangling, interpolation, and tranſpoſition, ſome valuable readings have been preſerved) the numbers are repeatedly given in two places of this paſſage, επτα και εβδομηκοντα και εξηκοντα δυο, *ſeven and ſeventy, and ſixty two*; and in one of the places we find καιρους, *times*, added to the numbers ſeven and ſeventy, and ετων, *years*, to the numbers ſixty two. Theſe numbers I apprehend to be according to

* The Greek verſion of the book of *Daniel*, heretofore in uſe, appears to have been not that of the *LXX*, but of *Theodotion.*

the true and original reading; and we may trace the veſtiges of them even in the Hebrew printed copy itſelf, neglecting the vowels only, and allowing a very ſmall and eaſy variation. For prefixing the ſingle letter ו to ששים, (for which we have alſo the authority of one of the oldeſt and moſt valuable Hebrew Manuſcripts in the Bodleian Library *) we may then read שבעים שבעה ושבעים וששים ושנים, and the literal tranſlation will be, *weeks ſeven and ſeventy, and three-ſcore and two*. Here we may obſerve, that to the numbers *threeſcore and two* no ſubſtantive at all is added to expreſs the thing numbered; it remains indeterminate therefore whether *weeks*, or *years*, or any other limitation of time, ſhould be ſupplied. Nor would there be any thing abſurd in ſuppoſing that it was deſignedly left thus indefinite, in order to keep up in ſome degree the enigmatical nature of a prophetic prediction. But in the very ſame Manuſcript already mentioned we find the word שנה itſelf, which is wanting to expreſs *years*, not indeed in its proper place, but tranſpoſed and ſubſtituted inſtead of שבעה *ſeven*; which, though certainly wrong as it ſtands at preſent, affords a ſtrong preſumption at leaſt that it once had a place in the neighbourhood — Compare the numbers thus reſtored and determined with the hiſtorical dates according to the received chronology, and you will ſee an accompliſh-

* Heb. MS. BODLEIAN. catalogued *Laud. A.* 162. preſumed to be not leſs than 800 years old.

ment

ment of the prophecy to an aſtoniſhing degree of exactneſs. For reckoning ſeventy ſeven weeks, or 539 years, from the date of Cyrus's decree, which is allowed to have taken place in the 536th year before the vulgar Chriſtian Æra, we ſhall come to the fourth year of that Æra; and conſequently the birth of Chriſt, the firſt coming of the Meſſiah, which by the learned is now pretty generally agreed to have been in the third or fourth year before the commencement of that Æra, will fall within the courſe of the ſeventy ſeventh week *.

* Cyrus's decree is generally allowed to have been iſſued in the year of the Julian Period 4178; and though it be not ſaid in what month, we may fairly preſume it to have been in the beginning of that year. For in the ſeventh month *(October)* the Iſraelites, being already ſettled in their reſpective cities, aſſembled at Jeruſalem, and kept the feaſt of tabernacles, Ezra iii. 1—6. Now if we allow the neceſſary time for making the decree known to all the Jews diſperſed throughout the Perſian dominions, for their preparations for the journey, for the journey itſelf, (which coſt Ezra not leſs than four months, though his company was ſmall in compariſon, Ezra vii. 9.) and laſtly, for the ſettling of them in their cities, before they could conveniently come to Jeruſalem, we ſhall hardly think eight months more than ſufficient for all this buſineſs. Granting therefore that the decree came forth in the beginning of the year 4178, and adding 76 weeks, or 532 years, the 76th week will be complete at the beginning of the year 4710. —Now if the time of Herod's death could be fixed, it would be a means of aſcertaining pretty nearly the date of Chriſt's birth, which certainly preceded that event, but not many months, as I am inclined to think for reaſons, which may be collected from comparing Matt. ii. with Luk. ii. 39. But Herod's death happened a little before the paſſover in the year of Rome 750 or 751, (See *Lardner's Credibility, append. p.* 569.) that is, according to *Varro*, in the year 4711, or 4712, of the Julian Period. If therefore we ſuppoſe our Saviour to have been born in the September preceding, (which is a much

And

And further, if the full period of ſeventy ſeven weeks be lengthened onward by the addition of threeſcore and two years, we ſhall then arrive at the ſixty ſixth year of the Chriſtian Æra, the very year of the breaking out of the Jewiſh war, which our Saviour himſelf frequently points out for the time of his ſecond Coming [a]. So preciſely and literally beyond conception was this prediction verified in a divided, as well as in a compounded, ſenſe, that *from the going forth of a commandment*, or *decree*, *to rebuild Jeruſalem unto the Meſſiah the Prince*, ſhould be *ſeventy and ſeven weeks*, *and threeſcore and two years* *.

more likely ſeaſon than the 25th of December) his coming in both caſes will fall within the 77th week, either in the firſt, or in the ſecond year of it; which is abundantly ſufficient to anſwer the prediction; it being according to common uſage in general computations, to conſider *a day*, *a week*, or *a year*, as complete with reſpect to an action, which took up any part of it. Thus Deut. xiv. 28. *At the end of*, or *after three years*, is expreſſed ch. xxvi. 12. *in the third year*. And when Rehoboam, 2 Chron. x. 5. ordered the people to come again to him *after three* days, it is ſaid, v. 12. that *they came on the third day*, *as the king bade*. And not to multiply inſtances, our Lord's predictions concerning himſelf, that *after three days he ſhould riſe again*, Mark viii. 31. and that *the Son of man ſhould be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, Matt. xii. 40. are in this manner underſtood to be fulfilled by his riſing on the third morning, although it is manifeſt he lay in the grave but a very ſmall part of the firſt and laſt days.

[a] Matt. xvi. 28. xxiv. 3.

* A very learned Friend, who was early made acquainted with the propoſal of accounting for the ſeventy ſeven weeks and threeſcore and two years, as ſtated in the preface, was ſtaggered with the objection that aroſe from transferring the ſurplus of years in the 77th week to the following

But before I advance farther, I muſt be allowed to take notice of an argument urged by a very able and learned critical writer *, becauſe it ſeems not altogether without its weight; although the concluſion I mean to deduce from it will be ſomewhat different from that which the author intended. The argument is founded on a celebrated paſſage in Joſephus's hiſtory of the Jewiſh war, in which that hiſtorian obſerves, that what chiefly animated his countrymen to take up arms, was their dependence on an ambiguous oracle found in their ſacred writings, that ABOUT THAT TIME *ſome one from their country ſhould rule over the world.* "This," ſays Joſephus, "they underſtood as appro-"priated to themſelves, and many of the wiſe men "were miſtaken in their judgment concerning it. But "what the oracle pointed out was the ſovereignty of "Veſpaſian, who was proclaimed Emperor in Judea." †

period. An objection which would equally have weighed with me perhaps, had the time been computed from the going forth of the decree unto the birth of the Meſſiah ſeventy ſeven weeks, and from the birth of the Meſſiah unto his ſecond coming threeſcore and two years. But the form of the expreſſion leads us to compute the two advents, not the latter from the former, but both alike from the going forth of Cyrus's decree; ſo that allowing from that decree to the firſt coming of Chriſt to be ſeventy ſeven weeks, yet it is alſo ſaid, that from that decree to the ſecond coming ſhould be ſeventy ſeven weeks and threeſcore and two years, that is, in all ſix hundred and one years.

* *Michaelis Epiſt. ad D. Joan. Pringle* fo. 105, &c.

† Lib. vi. c. 5. §. 4. Το δε επαραν αυτους μαλιστα προς τον πολεμον, ην

The ſame obſervation is made likewiſe by the heathen hiſtorians Suetonius † and Tacitus ‡. Upon this our learned author reaſons in the following manner; 1. That ſince the oracle ſpoken of was one that marked out a certain determinate time, it could be no other than this prophecy of Daniel, becauſe though there were others in the ſacred writings which foretold of the Meſſiah, there was none but this that pretended to aſſign the preciſe time of his coming. 2. That the oracle, which drew the Jews into rebellion, and was ſo egregiouſly miſtaken by their wiſe men, was the ſame which that hiſtorian applied to the Emperor Veſpaſian. And therefore, 3. That the time mentioned in the prophecy muſt have appeared to coincide with the times of the Jewiſh war, and of Veſpaſian's ex-

χρησμὸς αμφιβολος ομοιως εν τοις ιεροις ευρημενος γραμμασιν, "ὡς ΚΑΤΑ "ΤΟΝ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΝ, απο της χωρας τις αυτων αρξει της οικουμενης." τυτο οι μεν ως οικειον εξελαβον, και πολλοι των σοφων επλανηθησαν περι την κρισιν. εδηλυ δ' αρα περι την Ουεσπασιανυ το λογιον ηγεμονιαν, αποδειχθεντος επι Ιυδαιας αυτοκρατορος.

† Suetonius de Vita Veſpaſiani, cap. iv. Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & conſtans opinio, eſſe in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de Imperatore Romano quantum eventu poſtea prædictum paruit. Judæi ad ſe trahentes, rebellarunt.

‡ Tacitus Hiſt. lib. v. c. 13. Pluribus perſuaſio inerat, antiquis ſacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipſo tempore fore, ut valeſceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Quæ ambages Veſpaſianum ac Titum prædixerant. Sed vulgus, more humanæ cupidinis, ſibi tantam fatorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adverſis quidem ad vera mutabantur.

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altation to the imperial dignity. But it was impoſſible, our author thinks, that not the vulgar only, but even the learned among the Jews, and Joſephus himſelf, a man eminently ſkilled in chronology, could have ſo far miſcalculated the time, as they muſt have done according to every ſuppoſition, if they had found ſeventy weeks only in their ſacred copies, as we read at preſent. And thus far in all probability his reaſoning may hold. But when he proceeds to infer, (as indeed, to do him juſtice, he only does by a very modeſt inſinuation) that Joſephus certainly followed the reading and mode of computation, which he himſelf has adopted, the concluſion, I doubt, is more than the premiſſes will warrant. For, I think, it appears from what I have before advanced, taking no greater liberties in reforming the text than this Gentleman himſelf has done, and which, I truſt, are no more than the laws of criticiſm will warrant, that both Joſephus and his countrymen might otherwiſe have been juſtified in their expectations from this prophecy, in following the commonly received computation of time, which is far leſs liable to exception than that of lunar years, which he has imagined. For from the very nature of the Jewiſh eſtabliſhment it is abundantly evident, that though they might have reckoned a year or two together, as conſiſting of twelve lunar months, they never did nor could have carried on the ſame kind of reckoning for any long continued ſeries of years in

ſucceſſion * — But whatever force there may be in this author's argument, it will undoubtedly extend a great

* A Lunar year conſiſting of twelve Lunar months, or 354 days, falls ſhort of the aſtronomical Solar year, with which the ſeaſons return, by about eleven days. Conſequently with thoſe who compute their time by ſuch lunar years, the beginning of their year muſt make a very quick circuit through all the different ſeaſons ſucceſſively. But among the Jews the beginning of their year was by the Moſaic conſtitutions neceſſarily determined to one particular ſeaſon. The Month *Abib*, or *Niſan*, in which they came out of Egypt, was ordained to be unto them *the beginning of months, the firſt month of the year*; Exod. xii. 2. On the fourteenth day of this month the Paſchal lamb was to be killed, ver. 6. the fifteenth was the firſt of the days of unleavened bread, and was kept as a ſabbath, or day of holy reſt, in which no ſervile work was to be done; Lev. xxiii. 6, 7. and on the morrow after this ſabbath, τη δευτερα των αζυμων ημερα, εκτη δ' εστιν ης δεκατη, ſays *Joſephus*, *Ant. Jud.* lib. iii. c. 10. §. 5. they were directed to bring a ſheaf of the firſt fruits for a wave offering before the Lord, to be accepted for them. This was the beginning of their barley harveſt, the day in which they firſt *put the ſickle to their corn*; nor were they at liberty to taſte of the fruits of their ground, *neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until they had brought this offering unto their God.* Lev. xxiii. 10 — 14. From this time they were required to number ſeven complete weeks, and on the fiftieth day to offer a new meat offering unto the Lord of *the firſt fruits of their wheat harveſt.* Lev. xxiii. 15, &c. Exod. xxxiv. 22. Alſo on the fifteenth day of the ſeventh month they were commanded to obſerve *the feaſt of tabernacles*, otherwiſe called *the feaſt of ingathering, after that they had gathered in their corn and their wine.* Compare Lev. xxiii. 39. Exod. xxiii. 16. Deut. xvi. 13. Now it is obvious that theſe ordinances could not have been obſerved but ſeldom at their appointed times, had the beginning of the Jewiſh year been as variable with reſpect to the ſeaſons, as a courſe of lunar years would make it. For in about ſixteen ſuch years each ſeaſon would be changed for it's oppoſite; autumn would be ſtept into the place of ſpring; and the month *Abib*, inſtead of being the month of *green ears*, as the name imports, would fall in after all the fruits were already houſed in the

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deal farther than he has carried it. For it is very certain, that the expectations of the coming of the Meſſiah

barns. It it true, that in order to begin the year uniformly with the firſt day of the moon, the Jews gave the name of a year ſometimes to twelve lunar months, and that for two years ſucceſſively; in like manner as we for a ſimilar reaſon reckon three years together of 365 days each, reſerving the exceeding hours, as they did the days, to be accounted for in an after-reckoning. Accordingly the third year was ſure to be with them a kind of Leap year, by the intercalation of an additional month, which they called *Ve-adar*; and thus, by repeated intercalations duly made, their reckoning in the long run was brought to correſpond pretty nearly with Solar Computation, and the beginning of their year to fall in much about the ſame ſeaſon, and at no great diſtance from the vernal equinox; ἐν χρῳ τῳ πλιϑ χαϑεξωτος, as Joſephus teſtifies, *Ant. Jud.* lib. iii. c. 10. §. 5. Things being ſo, with what propriety can it be ſuppoſed that a ſeries of lunar years was here predicted, when it is manifeſt that the Jews had not, and probably no other nation then on earth had, any ſuch reckoning in uſe? Or muſt it not appear a very fallacious mode of proceeding, to make uſe of a term in a ſenſe different from the common acceptation of it, without giving previous and diſtinct notice of ſuch a deſign? Our learned advocate for theſe abbreviated lunar years (which others indeed before him had imagined) is well aware of all that can be ſaid againſt them, and ingenuouſly owns, that at firſt ſight it ſeems more natural to conceive ſolar years to be intended than lunar ones. But he had tried ſolar years, he ſays, in all manner of ways, and could find no notable events at all to correſpond with the dates. On the contrary, when he came to make trial with lunar ones, he found the events anſwer the prediction with the utmoſt accuracy. And this he thinks ſufficient both to clear up, and alſo to vindicate the uſe of ſo uncommon a mode of computation, at leaſt in a prophecy, where ambiguity is no objection before the time of it's accompliſhment. *Epiſt. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 203, 204. But what is this remarkable coincidence of events, that appears ſo much to the purpoſe? Why, having firſt ſettled with himſelf that the terms may poſſibly be rendered ſeventy Weeks, and ſeventy, and ſixty two, to

were

were never ſtronger nor more univerſally prevalent among the Jews, than about the time of our Saviour's birth. Hence the numbers of thoſe, who in Jeruſalem are ſaid to have *waited* at that time for *redemption*, and *the conſolation of Iſrael*[a]; perſons far advanced in years too; to one of whom notwithſtanding it had been *revealed by the holy ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death, until he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt*[b]. Hence alſo the jealouſy of Herod left this great perſon ſhould ſupplant him in his kingdom; and hence his bloody attempt to cut him off in his infancy[c]. Hence the flock-

which latter numbers he is pleaſed by conjecture to ſubjoin *years*, he then proceeds to calculation, and finds that by the aſſumption of lunar years not only the ſum of the three periods taken together will give a date that falls in with the times of the Jewiſh war; but that the two former of them terminate, the one in the taking of Jeruſalem by Pompey the great, the other in the reduction of Judæa to the condition of a Roman province. Both theſe events I grant to be memorable ones, and of much importance to the civil conſtitution of the Jews. But what near or immediate relation have they to the coming of the Meſſiah, in which lies the diſtinguiſhing excellence of the hypotheſis above laid down in the text, that both the periods ſpecified have an equal relation to the advent of that great perſon; with this further advantage alſo, that the numbers given are not from a mere conjecture or fancy of my own, but are ſupported by the oldeſt verſion extant, exhibiting, for all that we know to the contrary, the approved and ordinary conſtruction put upon the terms in thoſe early times. But I ſhall purſue this matter no farther, leaving it to ſuch of the learned as may chance to peruſe theſe obſervations (and I know none more capable than the learned Profeſſor himſelf) to determine of the comparative probability at leaſt of the two hypotheſes in this particular.

[a] Luke ii. 25, 38. [b] Luke ii. 26. [c] Matt. ii. 3, 16.

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ing of the multitudes to John the Baptiſt [a], and their *muſing in their hearts* concerning him, *whether he were the Chriſt, or not* [b]. Nor was it the common people only, whoſe attention was thus attracted towards him; their very rulers themſelves ſent the miniſters of religion to enquire into his character, who ſeemed very much diſturbed and perplexed, when they heard him declare that he was not the Chriſt [c]. When our Saviour himſelf appeared afterwards, the whole nation almoſt ſeemed ready to devote themſelves to his ſervice, if he would but have taken upon himſelf the ſtate and character of a temporal prince and deliverer; for ſuch they had fondly conceived their Meſſiah would be. And when they found themſelves diſappointed in him, who was indeed the real Meſſiah, although his kingdom was not of this world, they were many of them ready to follow the fortunes of impoſtors, by whom they were frequently betrayed to their ruin [d]. Theſe early expectations muſt be ſuppoſed to have ſome ſcriptural foundation likewiſe; for ſcarce any thing elſe could have procured them ſuch ſtrong and univerſal credit. But the time of our Saviour's birth was at too great a diſtance from that of which Joſephus has ſpoken, being a difference of not leſs than ſeventy years, for to admit a ſuppoſition that the one could poſſibly be

[a] Matt. iii. 5. Mark. i. 5. [b] Luk. iii. 15. [c] Joh. i. 19, &c.
[d] Acts v. 36, 37. xxi. 38. Joſeph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 7. §. 6, 10. De Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 13. §. 4, 5.

miſtaken

miſtaken in calculation for the other. What then? Had this ſcriptural prophecy fixed on both times for the Meſſiah's appearance? It had done ſo upon the footing on which I have placed it; but, I think, after no other plan or mode of interpretation whatever.

Let us proceed now to the conſideration of the remainder of this verſe, where the words, תשוב ונבנתה רחוב וחרוץ ובצוק העתים, are by our tranſlators rendered, *the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.* To this tranſlation the following objections occur; firſt, that the verbs תשוב ונבנתה, being both feminine, cannot by the rules of grammar be conſtructed with the following nouns, which are maſculine. But granting that this objection might be got over by making Jeruſalem the ſubject of the verbs, and the nouns *ſtreet* and *wall* to be uſed in appoſition; it may next be queſtioned by what authority the word חרוץ is interpreted to ſignify *a wall.* In this ſenſe it is certainly uſed no where elſe; and, I think, it will be found difficult to account how any ſuch meaning can be deduced from its root, or from any term of affinity with it*. To this may be added, that after it

* Dr Prideaux ſays, that חרוץ ought to be rendered *a ditch*; but then he is for giving a figurative ſenſe to it, as indeed he does to רחוב, *ſtreet*, and to the whole verſe; which I can never be brought to acquieſce in, whilſt a literal conſtruction is admiſſible. The Profeſſor Michaelis owns himſelf totally at a loſs, and unable to ſatisfy himſelf with his own or any other conjectures about the true ſenſe of theſe words.

had

had been ſaid, that Jeruſalem ſhould be built again, it was ſcarcely neceſſary to ſpecify that it ſhould be built with a *ſtreet*; for how elſe could it well be ſuppoſed to be built as a city? And laſtly, by the *troublous times* it is uſual to underſtand thoſe, in which the walls were repaired under Nehemiah, who had to contend with the inſidious practices of Sanballat and his companions [a]. But it ſeems not very likely, that an oppoſition ſo weak and inconſiderable, which only ſerved to create an alarm, but had not power to interrupt the progreſs of the work, could be deemed of conſequence enough to be ſo particularly noticed and predicted. In ſome of the ancient verſions the words רחוב and חרוץ are rendered in a different ſenſe; and in the Greek of the *Seventy* in particular they are expreſſed by *εις πλατος και μηκος*, *in breadth and length*. But I apprehend that by the alteration of a ſingle point they are both inſtead of nouns to be conſidered as verbs of the infinitive mood taken gerundively, and anſwering to the latin gerunds, *ſe dilatando et progrediendo*.* For רחב ſignifies properly *to be enlarged*; and one of

[a] Nehem. Chap. IV. & VI.

* In one of the MSS. collated at Paris the latter of theſe words is read with the prepoſition ב before it, ובחרוץ, which ſtrengthens the ſuppoſition of its being a gerund; and though I do not find that any of the Collations exhibit רחוב with the like prefix, yet the rendering of this word by the LXX with the prepoſition *εις* before it, as above ſpecified, affords ſome reaſon to preſume that it might have been ſo read in ſome of the more ancient copies.

the primary ſenſes aſcribed to the other verb חרץ is *to move* or *advance forward* [a]. The whole ſentence therefore, ſetting aſide the Hebrew idiom, may be thus rendered; *it* (namely, Jeruſalem) *ſhall be rebuilt, growing ſtill greater and more conſiderable, even amidſt times of diſtreſs.* Nor could any deſcription better ſuit the condition of the Jews and their capital city in general during the period under notice, For after their reſtoration to their country their affairs were far from being in ſo proſperous a courſe, as hath ſometimes been imagined; but bating a few years of liberty, which they enjoyed under ſome of their princes of the Aſmonæan race, they were for the reſt held in ſervile ſubjection to the Perſians and other conquering powers, by whom they were frequently oppreſſed, and their city five times taken and ſpoiled by the enemy. * Theſe therefore might ſurely with reaſon be reckoned *troublous times*, or *times of diſtreſs*; but notwithſtanding all theſe circumſtances ſo unfavorable in appearance, Jeruſalem from a mean beginning, repeopled

[a] See 2 Sam. v. 24.

* The city was taken, firſt, by Ptolemy the ſon of Lagus, who is ſaid to have carried off 100000 Jews captives, in the year before Chriſt CCCXX. Secondly, by Antiochus Epiphanes in the year before Chriſt CLXX, who then did much miſchief; and two years after it was miſerably plundered and burnt by his general Apollonius. Pompey the great took it again in the year before Chriſt LXIII; after this it was taken by Antigonus and the Parthians in the year before Chriſt XL; and laſtly, by Herod in conjunction with Soſius the Roman Commander in the year before Chriſt XXXVII. See *Uſſerii Annales* according to the abovementioned dates reſpectively, with references to Joſephus and other hiſtorians.

with

with a few impoveriſhed inhabitants juſt returned from exile, was enabled to hold up its head, and daily to improve in conſideration and figure; till it was advanced at length to ſuch a pitch of ſplendor, magnificence, and ſtrength, as it never had known before, even under the moſt powerful and independent of its monarchs. Events ſo very ſingular and extenſively important as theſe might well deſerve to be pointed out to notice beforehand, that when they actually came to paſs, the hand of an over-ruling providence might be acknowledged in the diſpoſition and arrangement of them.

FROM henceforward to the end of the chapter the matter, I conceive, will be found wholly to relate to the laſt period, which is that of a *week*, or *ſeven years*, commencing with the year of our Lord LXVI, when the Jewiſh war broke out, which is acknowledged to be Chriſt's ſecond coming[a], and ending with the final concluſion of that war in the year LXXIII. If in elucidating this part of our ſubject we ſhall meet with the ſame clearneſs and notoriety of evidence as hath already attended us thus far, may we not flatter ourſelves with having attained to at leaſt a more probable and conſiſtent interpretation of this prophecy, than any which has hitherto come to our knowledge?

To proceed then with the 26th verſe.

[a] Matt. xxiv. 3.

ver. 26. ואחרי השבעים ששים ושנים יכרת משיח
ואין לו והעיר והקדש ישחית עם נגיד הבא וקצו בשטף
ועד קץ מלחמה נחרצת שממות׃

And after threeſcore and two weeks ſhall Meſſiah be cut off, but not for himſelf; and the people of the prince that ſhall come ſhall deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary; and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined.

The firſt words of this verſe, which according to the reading of the printed Hebrew text our tranſlators have rendered, *and after threeſcore and two weeks*, give us a date, from which this latter period is to be reckoned; and as they are evidently deſigned to mark out preciſely the ſame time as the foregoing, it might be thought ſufficient perhaps to juſtify the ſubſtituting of the ſame numbers again, which have already been ſettled; eſpecially as there is good reaſon to doubt of the integrity of the text, both from the various readings that are to be met with, and alſo from other ſuſpicious circumſtances. But for more complete ſatisfaction I ſhall conſider the matter more diſtinctly, and endeavour to point out upon what grounds, and by what means, the numbers in both paſſages may fairly be reduced to perfect harmony and agreement. It has before been obſerved

ſerved [a], that in the Greek verſion of the *Seventy* the numerals are exactly alike in both paſſages; with this difference, that in one place there is no ſubſtantive at all, in the other the numerals are preceded by the word καιρους, *times*. In the Greek verſion of *Aquila* we read, μετα τας επτα εβδομαδας και εξηκοντα δυο, *after the ſeven weeks and ſixty two*; and the ſame in the Arabic verſion; ſo that theſe two ſeem to have read the Hebrew text as it ſtands at preſent, with the addition of שבע, *ſeven*, and the ו before ששים, as in the verſe preceding. In this caſe the reading followed by them and by the *Seventy* with reſpect to the words expreſſing the numerals will be found to differ nothing at all, only that, by means of a different punctuation, what the one have tranſlated *weeks*, the other have more properly rendered *ſeventy*. Upon the joint authority therefore of the three verſions we may read the text, ואחרי השבעים שבע וששים ושנים, that is, *and after the ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two*; or, *after the ſeventy ſeven, and threeſcore and two*. But it is not from theſe various readings only that we are led to ſuſpect a corruption in the text; there is alſo a further proof of it to be drawn from a grammatical defect. For it is obſerved as a rule in the Hebrew language, that where the ſubſtantive and adjective are brought cloſe together in a propoſition, if the ſubſtantive has the definitive article ה, anſwering to THE with

[a] p. 29.

us,

us, prefixed to it, the ſame muſt be prefixed to the adjective likewiſe. Conſequently we may not here read *haſhabuim*, *weeks*, becauſe the next word has no ſuch article prefixed to it. But there is a very remarkable reading to be met with in one of the ancient Bodleian Manuſcripts of good repute *; which is, העתים, *times*, inſerted immediately after ואחרי. This exactly correſponds with the καιρους of the *Seventy*, though there appears no other mark of communication between them; this ſolves the grammatical difficulty, and determines the next word (which in the Manuſcript is not pointed at all) to be *haſhibim*, *ſeventy*, and not *haſhabuim*, *weeks*; and this reduces the date in this place to a perfect conſonancy with the foregoing; and, as *times* is a general term comprehending both *weeks* and *years*, this alſo ſupplies the ſubſtantive that is wanting to the ſeveral numerals that follow. Upon all which accounts there is good reaſon to conclude, that we have the genuine reading of the text thus reſtored upon authority, ואחרי העתים השבעים שבע וששים ושנים: *And after the times ſeventy ſeven, and threeſcore and two.*

In the ambiguity of the verb next ſucceeding, which may be conſtrued either in an active or paſſive ſenſe, the foundation of the wrong interpretation, which hath prevailed generally among Chriſtians, ſeems to be

* Heb. MS. Bodleian catalogued *Huntingdon* N°. 12.

laid.

laid. For being pointed ſo as to be read paſſively, יכרת, *(yikkareth)* and rendered in conjunction with its ſubject, *Meſſiah ſhall be cut off*, what wonder that the death of Chriſt ſhould come to be conſidered as the leading object of the prophecy? Hence aroſe a neceſſity by ſome means or other to adapt the time and other circumſtances in a manner ſuitable to this fundamental hypotheſis*; and hence the next words, ואין לו, which in our verſion are badly rendered, *but not for himſelf*, are tortured in a variety of ways beſides, in order to extort a ſenſe, which the natural conſtruction of them will not admit of. But ſetting prepoſſeſſion aſide, it is manifeſt, that the matter all along treated of has been no other than the fate of Jeruſalem taken in ſucceſſive periods, firſt deſolated for a time, then again rebuilt and flouriſhing, though amidſt the viciſſitudes of fortune, and now at laſt devoted to fall into a worſe condition than before, and ſinking ſo, as never, at leaſt not for many, very many ages, to riſe again. Why then ſhould we not read יכרת משיח actively, and in connection with the following words, ואין לו והעיר והקרש, rendering the whole

* The method uſually followed by the interpreters of this paſſage has been, firſt taking it for granted, that the death of the Meſſiah was undoubtedly here intended, and fixed to take place about the latter end of theſe weeks, to count back, *inverſo ordine*, in order to find a ſuitable decree for the commencement of them. And this being determined according to fancy, the reſt was all accommodated as ingeniouſly as poſſible; although ſometimes for this purpoſe (to borrow Profeſſor *Michaelis*'s words) *multis artibus hermeneuticis, magna detorſione, opus fuit.*

together

together according to a very eaſy and familiar conſtruction, *Meſſiah ſhall cut off from belonging to him both the city and the ſanctuary* *? For was not this literally and in fact the caſe? Heretofore God had taken the Jewiſh nation under his more immediate care, and had acknowledged a peculiar relation between himſelf, and *the city and ſanctuary that were called by his name*. But they had rejected him whom God had

* Literally, *Meſſiah ſhall cut off, and neither the city nor ſanctuary* ſhall be *to him*, or, ſhall be *his*. In two MSS, one collated at Rome, the other at Erfurt, the ו is wanting before העיר, by which means it's dependence on the preceding words, ואין לו, would appear ſtill more ſtrongly; but there is no defect in the text, as it ſtands at preſent. It is ſurpriſing however, that Biſhop Lloyd, who almoſt touched the truth (if I may now be allowed to call it ſo) as it were *ſummis digitis*, did not by one effort more arrive at the full diſcovery of it. For he interprets ואין לו to ſignify the rejection of the Jews from being the people of the Meſſiah, and is perſuaded that all the following paſſages to the end of the chapter muſt needs be referred to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. But the fatal prepoſſeſſion he was under in common with others reſpecting the Meſſiah's death lay as a ſtumbling block in his way, and turned him aſide from a ſenſe altogether complete in itſelf, eaſy, natural, and conſiſtent, into one defective and labouring both in matter and form. For, firſt, after ואין לו it is required to ſupply יהיה עמו, but from whence is not very eaſy to ſay, there being nothing in the context that ſeems readily to lead to it. Secondly, by עם נגיד הבא we are to underſtand *the future people of the Prince* or *Meſſiah*, that is, the Romans; although theſe were certainly not Chriſt's people at the time when they atchieved the deſtruction of the city and ſanctuary. And laſtly, the whole conſtruction throughout is extremely perplexed, not to ſay ungrammatical; but particularly ſo, when we come to refer the affix pronoun in וקצו to its proper antecedent. See Biſhop Lloyd's hypotheſis explained by Mr *Marſhal* at the beginning of his *Chronological treatiſe on the 70 weeks of Daniel*, p. 4, 5.

ſent

ſent to be their *prince* and their *ſaviour*; and were in turn rejected by him whoſe authority they had diſclaimed, and were totally caſt off out of his covenant and protection. Hence the Goſpel writers have conſtantly marked out the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the temple as the eſpecial end of the Meſſiah's ſecond coming, and the conſequential effects of that power, which he ſhould diſplay to the confuſion of his enemies, and the utter abolition of their civil and religious eſtabliſhment [a].

Agreeably to the foregoing interpretation the next words, ישחית עם נגיד הבא, are likewiſe to be taken together, and we may tranſlate them, *the prince that ſhall come ſhall deſtroy the people*. To this conſtruction no objection can poſſibly lie within itſelf, becauſe it is what the words naturally run into of their own accord. To conſider it then with reſpect to the context. By *the prince* it has been uſual to underſtand Titus, the ſon of Veſpaſian; and by *the people* the army over which he commanded, and with which he deſtroyed both the city and temple. But this is having recourſe to ſecondary cauſes only, inſtead of looking up to the principal agent and firſt mover of all, even to him, of whom it was foretold, that *he ſhould ſend forth his armies to deſtroy thoſe murderers, and to burn up their city* [b]. In the preceding verſe a date, we ſee, was fixed

[a] Matt. xxiv. 3, &c. [b] Matt. xxii. 7.

for the coming of one, who is pointed out by the double name of THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE. And if by the firſt of thoſe titles the ſame individual perſon is allowed to be intended here, what neceſſity can there be, or what reaſon, to look for another, who ſhould be repreſented by the ſecond? Beſides, the epithet הבא, *that ſhall come*, carries a direct reference to the *coming* before intimated, and was on that very account afterwards made one of the titles of diſtinction, by which this *Meſſiah and Prince* came to be characterized and enquired after in ſucceeding times. *Art thou* ο ερχομενος, *he that ſhould come, or do we look for another*[a]? But there is likewiſe an eſpecial fitneſs in the circumſtances of the caſe, which required that the relation of *prince* and *people* ſhould be particularly noticed, in order to point out the malignity of the crime, and to vindicate the juſtice of ſo terrible and rigorous a puniſhment. Accordingly our Lord himſelf hath thus marked it in his prophetic parables; in one of which he ſpeaks of himſelf as of a juſtly incenſed ſovereign, bent to chaſtiſe the inſolence of diſloyal citizens, who hated his power, and had revolted from his authority[b]; and in another he ſtiles himſelf *the Lord of the vineyard*, whoſe huſbandmen had wickedly abuſed their truſt; and whom therefore at his coming he ſhould totally extirpate, and let out his vineyard to

[a] Matt. xi. 3. [b] Luke xix. 14, 27.

others,

others, from whom he might hope for a more reaſonable and grateful return [a].

THE words which follow next in ſucceſſion, וקצו בשטף, *and the end*, or rather, *the cutting off, thereof* ſhall be *with a flood*, bear a very notable and convincing teſtimony to the propriety of the foregoing conſtruction. For on any other ground it is not eaſy to aſſign the antecedent, to which the pronoun *thereof* has reference. *The Meſſiah* it could not be; for how could he be ſaid to be *cut off with a flood?* Nor could it be *the city and ſanctuary*; for then the pronoun ſhould have been in the plural, inſtead of the ſingular, number. Nor could it be *the city* ſingly, as including *the ſanctuary*; becauſe העיר, *the city*, is feminine, but the pronoun is maſculine. Nor, laſtly, could it refer to *people*, if by *people* were underſtood the Roman army; nor to their *Commander*; becauſe neither was he *cut off* himſelf, nor did his army ſuſtain any remarkable loſs. But if by *people* be underſtood *the Jewiſh nation*, as we ſuppoſe, the ſyntax of grammar is duly preſerved, and the particular means pointed out, by which *the exciſion*, before ſpoken of in general terms only, was to be effected, namely, *by the invaſion of hoſtile armies*. For who knows not, that in the language of prophecy it is uſual to deſcribe the marching of great armies into the heart of a country by the inundation

[a] Matt. xxi. 40, 41. Mark xii. 9. Luke xx. 15, 16.

of mighty waters, which ſweeps away all before it, and ſpreads havoc and devaſtation over the face of the whole land †.

THE prophecy goes on to deſcribe the proceſs of this calamity in the following words, ועד קץ מלחמה נחרצת שממות, where the chief difficulty lies in aſcertaining the proper ſenſe of נחרצת. Our tranſlators have rendered it *determined*, ſeemingly in deference to the Vulgate; the authority of which is the rather queſtionable here, as it varies from its own uſage on other ſimilar occaſions *. There appears but little or no ground for aſcribing any ſuch ſenſe to the verb חרץ; but we have already obſerved it to have the ſignification of *moving* or *advancing forwards*, and ſo have applied it, ver. 25. Hence חרוץ, the adjective, comes to ſignify *active* or *diligent*; and accordingly the paſſive participle נחרצת, when joined with מלחמה, *war*, (which is its moſt obvious conſtruction) may very fairly be underſtood, *puſhed on with activity and vigor*; an epithet never applied to any war more juſtly than this, where both ſides diſcovered ſuch uncommon ardor and zeal in the proſecution, as if reſolved to haſten it forward to the moſt ſpeedy concluſion. Nor was this a merely caſual circumſtance, but ſo ordered by a ſpecial diſpoſition of divine providence, as we learn from

† See Iſai. viii. 7, 8. xvii. 12. xxviii. 2. lix 19. Jer. xlvi. 7, 8. xlvii. 2. Dan. xi. 22.

* See Iſai. x. 22. where נחרצה is rendered *abbreviata*.

our

our Saviour's own declaration, Matt. xxiv. 22. *And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortened, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved; but for the elects ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortened.* From whence it appears, not only that the war was unuſually haſtened, which indeed is obſerved by Joſephus and other hiſtorians*; but that it was ſo haſtened, in order to put a ſtop to thoſe very deſolations, which could not fail of taking place during the continuance of it; deſolations, which Chriſt deſcribes to be *ſuch, as never had been before ſince the beginning of the world, nor ever ſhould be the like again*[a]; and which, had they been of longer continuance, muſt have ended in the utter extinction of every human being in Judea, even of thoſe who were not deſtined to periſh in the general ruin. Let us therefore render the words before recited thus; *And unto the end of a war carried on with rapidity ſhall be deſolations.*

ver. 27. והגביר ברית לרבים שבוע אחד וחצי השבוע
ישבית זבח ומנחה ועל כנף שקוצים משמם ועד
כלה ונחרצה תתך על שומם׃

And he ſhall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe; and for the overſpreading of abominations he ſhall make it deſolate, even until the conſummation, and that determined, ſhall be poured upon the deſolate.

* See Joſeph. de Bello Jud. lib. v. cap. 12. §. 1. Tacitus hiſt. lib. v. 11.

[a] Matt. xxiv. 21.

We are now come to the 27th and laſt verſe; where at the beginning we meet with thoſe two occurrences, which, as we have before ſeen [a], occaſioned ſuch infinite perplexity, when improperly taken, and were found ſo hard to reconcile with each other; but when rightly underſtood, and introduced in their due time, will appear wonderfully clear, conſiſtent, and agreeable to hiſtorical truth. Of theſe the firſt is comprized in the following terms; *And*, or rather, *But he ſhall confirm the covenant*, or, *make a firm covenant*, (for there is no definitive article before ברית) *with many for one week*; which ſome of thoſe, who attribute them, as doubtleſs they ought to be attributed, to the period we are treating of, underſtand of the firm treaty of peace about that time concluded between Corbulo the Roman general and the Parthians and other neighbouring powers *, which ſerved greatly to facilitate the progreſs of the Roman arms in the reduction of Judea. Others again by *many* underſtand the Roman armies themſelves, enliſted under the banners of *the Meſſiah the prince*, and as it were confederated with him during the courſe of the war, which laſted juſt a week or ſeven years, for the purpoſe of wreaking a common vengeance upon the Jews, who were alike enemies to both. But though there is a great deal of plauſibility in both theſe opinions, and

[a] p. 9, 10, 11.

* Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. 29, 30, 31.

the

the fact in both inſtances is true, yet we ſeem not by either of them to have fully reached the true import of the text. For the רבים, or *many*, ſeem rather to relate to *ſome of the people* beforementioned [a], who by particular compact and agreement were to be exempted from ſinking under thoſe diſaſters, which proved ſo fatal to the reſt of their countrymen. And who could theſe ſo probably be, as the faithful followers of Chriſt, who had received a promiſe of protection from their maſter's own mouth, and an aſſurance that *not a hair of their heads ſhould periſh*; but that by patient perſeverance they ſhould preſerve their lives [b], whilſt the unbelievers ſhould be ſwallowed up *in the days of vengeance.* Nor was the promiſe ineffectual; for we learn from Joſephus, that when Ceſtius had brought up his army on a ſudden before Jeruſalem, and had carried on his attack ſo ſucceſsfully, that he was well nigh maſter of the place, and muſt infallibly have taken it, had he perſiſted a little longer, whereby he would have had the whole nation together at his mercy, then aſſembled within the walls at the feaſt of tabernacles; on a ſudden, ſeized with a panic, he broke up in a moſt unmilitary manner, and contrary to the expectation of every one; and drew off his troops to a diſtance, giving thoſe who would a fair opportunity to eſcape *. Accordingly, ſays Joſephus, "many of

[a] ver. 26. [b] Luke xxi. 18, 19.
* Joſephus de Bello Jud. Lib. ii. cap. 19.

"the

"the illuſtrious Jews immediately quitted the city as "a ſhip that was ſinking." * But ſo unaccountable did the Roman General's conduct appear to that Hiſtorian, that he could not help attributing it to the overruling hand of God †, which indeed interpoſed to make good the promiſe of his ſon to his diſciples. For, as the ancient Chriſtian writers Euſebius and Epiphanius both relate ‡, the Chriſtians warned by a ſpecial revelation (which no doubt was the admonition their Lord had left with them, of which we ſhall have further occaſion to ſpeak preſently) took that opportunity which Ceſtius's departure afforded them, and fled inſtantly to the mountains, where they continued in ſafety till the war was ended. After a little while the city was inveſted a ſecond time, and ſo cloſely hemmed in by the Roman ſoldiery from without, and guarded by the jealous vigilance of the beſieged within, that from thenceforward an eſcape became matter of exceedingly great hazard and difficulty.

THE other particular before alluded to is, that *in the midſt of the week he ſhould cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe*; וחצי השבוע ישבית זבח ומנחה By the words חצי השבוע, *in the midſt*, or *half*, *of the week*, it is ſufficient if, without exacting a mathematical nicety of diviſion, we underſtand any time in or

* Joſeph. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. 20. §. 1.
† ibid. cap. 19. §. 6.
‡ Euſeb. Hiſt. lib. iii. cap. 5. Epiphan. Hæreſ. Nazaren. § 7.

about

about the fourth year of the war; a latitude of expreſſion which any good hiſtorian would allow himſelf, and conſequently may be allowed to a prophet likewiſe, who is an hiſtorian before the event. But to admit, as ſome have done for the ſake of an hypotheſis *, that what happened at the very end of a period might be ſaid to have been brought about in *the half*, meaning *the latter half*, of it, is to adopt a ſtile of language, which, I think, is hardly juſtifiable upon the principles of common uſage †. The proper ſignification of זבח is a *victim* or *ſlain beaſt*, and of מנחה is an offering of fine flour mixed with oil and frankincenſe, which was called *the meat-offering*; and as this was directed to be added as an appendage to the lambs that were ſacrificed morning and evening in the daily ſervice of the ſanctuary, both theſe together may be underſtood to denote what is known by the name of *the continual ſacrifice* or *burnt-offering* ‡. Now the

* See Page 11. and the Note p. 12.

† To make uſe of language in this manner ſeems to me no better than ſolemn trifling. For at this rate where is the difference between ſaying that an event ſhould take place in ſuch a week, or in the half of it; ſince whatever ſhould happen in any part of that week, would certainly happen in the half of it alſo, meaning either the former or the latter half of it?

‡ Exod. xxix. 38 — 42. Num. xxviii. 3 — 8. Note, that in neither of theſe places is any mention made of frankincenſe mixed with the meat-offering; but Lev. ii. 1, 2. it is directed to be added to every meat-offering, in order to be burnt *for a ſweet ſavour unto the Lord*, as the daily meat offering is alſo ſaid to be.

Jewiſh war is uſually computed to have begun with the taking of Maſada in May of the year of our Lord LXVI, and to have ended with the retaking of the ſame town in April LXXIII, completing the term of ſeven years; although each date may be extended either way, a little forward or a little backward, without prejudice to hiſtorical or prophetic truth. The city of Jeruſalem was taken in the beginning of September of the year LXX; and ſome little time before, Joſephus ſays on the ſeventeenth day of the month *Παναμος*, which according to Suidas anſwers to the July of the Romans, Titus was informed that the daily ſacrifice, for want of perſons to attend it, had been diſcontinued, it is uncertain for how long time before; and that the people in the city were very uneaſy on that account *. So punctually do we find this part of the prophecy alſo verified in its accompliſhment.

THE next words are thoſe, which are manifeſtly quoted, in part at leaſt, by our Saviour himſelf, in ſpeaking of the ſigns which ſhould portend the approaching deſolation of Jeruſalem. It muſt be our buſineſs to conſider, how far the quotation can be brought to agree with the words as they ſtand, or may fairly be ſuppoſed to have ſtood, in the original text. Our Saviour's words are thus reported by St Matthew; *When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of*

* Joſeph. De Bello Jud. lib. vi. cap. 2. §. 1.

deſolation

deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, εν τοπω αγιω [a]; and by St Mark ſomewhat differently; *But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtanding where it ought not,* οπου ου δει [b]. But by St Luke they are evidently paraphraſed; *And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies;* οταν δε ιδητε κυκλουμενην υπο ςρατοπεδων την Ιερυσαλημ [c]. From which difference it is evident, firſt of all, that the Evangeliſts did not think it neceſſary to adhere to the preciſe words uſed by our Lord, provided they kept up to the ſenſe of them; and ſecondly, that by *the abomination of deſolation ſtanding in the holy place,* or *where it ought not,* the ſame is meant as by *Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies,* the armies of the Roman empire, which were an abomination to the Jews on account of their ſtandards, to which a religious worſhip was paid *, at the ſame time that they were uſed as the immediate inſtrument of their deſolation. Let us now conſider the Hebrew text. Some perſons ſeem to be much elated (perhaps more ſo than there is occaſion for) on account of a diſcovery lately made in the collation of an Hebrew Manuſcript in the Royal Library at Paris, which is ſaid to contain a reading more conformable to the words cited by our Saviour, than that which is found in the printed copies. The difference is, that inſtead of, ועל כנף

[a] ch. xxiv. 15. [b] ch. xiii. 14. [c] ch. xxi. 20.

* Joſeph. De bello Jud. lib. vi. c. 6. §. 1.

שקוצים משמם, the Manuſcript reads, ובהיכל יהיה שיקוץ משומם, which literally tranſlated is, *and in the temple* ſhall be *the abomination of deſolation*, or *of the deſolator*; and is the ſame with what is to be met with in the Latin Vulgate, *et erit in templo abominatio deſolationis*. But I am afraid there is a much greater reformation of the text made here, than can reaſonably be expected, or indeed be approved of. Thus much perhaps we may be induced to give the Manuſcript credit for, that it has given the true reading of שיקוץ, *abomination*, in the ſingular number, inſtead of שקוצים in the plural; which latter is diſclaimed by moſt of the ancient verſions, as well as by the Goſpel citations; and beſides will ſcarcely afford a tolerable ſenſe conſiſtent with grammar *. It is alſo eaſy to conceive how a tranſcriber might be led to add the *Mem* to the end of שיקוץ from the next word beginning with the ſame letter, after which the tranſpoſition of the *Jod* would be deemed a natural correction. But the difference is ſo very great between ועל כנף and ובהיכל יהיה, that the one could not poſſibly be ſubſtituted for the other by accident; and ſuppoſing there was a deſign to change ובהיכל יהיה, I think it would puzzle any man to gueſs why the words ועל כנף

* If we read שקוצים, it cannot be conſtrued *in regimine* with the following noun, as it ſhould then be שקוצי. Of this our tranſlators ſeem to have been well aware, who, as well as the *Syriac*, have referred it back to the noun preceding, כנף, but with what propriety as to the ſenſe, is matter of queſtion.

ſhould

ſhould be fixed on to be placed in their ſtead; whereas the reaſon is ſufficiently obvious for making the change in the contrary direction. But after all, is it true that the new found reading is more conformable in this particular to our Lord's quotation than the old eſtabliſhed one? To me, I muſt confeſs, it appears otherwiſe. Indeed it is far from being clear, that our Saviour cited from the prophet Daniel any more than the two words, which ſignify, *the abomination of deſolation*; for his words are, *When ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet*; whereas if the reſt had been a part of the citation, it ought rather to have been expreſſed thus, *When ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſtanding in the holy place*, or *where it ought not*, *as ſpoken of*, or *foretold*, *by the prophet Daniel*. But neither do the terms, *holy place*, or *where it ought not*, neceſſarily imply the ſtructure or edifice of the temple, but take in the environs of it alſo, the mountain on which it was built; and even the whole city with its ſuburbs, on account of its relation to God, was accounted *holy* too, and therefore unfit to be profaned by the approach of any thing ſo abominable, as were the idols of heathen worſhip. Nor is it true, that the Roman legions ever did ſet up their ſtandards in the temple, בהיכל, that is, within or upon the houſe or building, till ſuch time as the city was finally taken; whereas the fact alluded to by Chriſt was manifeſtly ſomething prior to that event, as a prognoſtic of it; and doubtleſs was meant of that

near

near approach which Ceſtius made, when he had taken the lower town, and came near enough to attempt ſetting fire to the outer gate of the temple *. Then I think it might properly be ſaid, that the *abomination of deſolation* was על כנף, *upon the border* or *outſkirt* of both the city and temple; for כנף, which primarily ſignifies *wing*, is uſed metaphorically to denote the *border* or *extremity* of any thing, as of a garment, and alſo of a place or territory. So that *the abomination of deſolation being on the border* anſwers well to *Jeruſalem being compaſſed with armies, ſtanding in the holy place*, and *where*, in the eſtimation of a Jew at leaſt, *they* certainly *ought not*. This therefore I conceive to be the genuine reading, ועל כנף שיקוץ משמם, and that it ought to be rendered thus; *And on the border* (encompaſſing and preſſing cloſe upon the beſieged) ſhall be *the abomination of deſolation*. †

* Joſeph. de Bello Jud. lib. ii. cap. 19. §. 5.

† The learned *Michaelis (Epiſt. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 206, &c.) ſeems much to approve of the reading of the Pariſian Manuſcript, and imagines he has found a confirmation of it in that paſſage of *Joſephus De Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. c. 5. §. 4. where it is ſaid, *that the Jews were forewarned in their oracular writings, that the city and temple ſhould be deſtroyed, whenever the temple was reduced to a quadrangular form.* He argues, that no other prophecy could be alluded to in theſe words, than that which we are now examining; becauſe, he ſays, there is no other but this in the ſacred books of the Old Teſtament, which relates to the taking of the city by the Romans. He infers therefore from hence, that Joſephus certainly found in the copies of his time the ſame reading exactly as that

The laſt clauſe of all, ועד כלה ונחרצה תתך על שומם, is now the only one that remains to be eluci-

of the *Pariſian* MS. now cited; but that inſtead of שִׁקּוּץ (ſhikkutz) *abomination*, he by a different punctuation took it for שֹׁמֵם (ſhejjakotz) *qui abſcindet*, and applied it to the cutting off of the communication between the temple and the tower *Antonia*, by ſetting fire to the porticos, which joined the latter on to the former, as a wing running out from the main body of the building; ſo that when this wing was cut off, the figure of the temple became truly quadrangular. But in objection to this it may be noticed, that the abſciſſion would then be aſcribed to the Roman legions, or their general, who are undoubtedly here meant by *the deſolator*; whereas it was the work of the Jews themſelves, as Joſephus expreſsly relates, *De Bello Jud.* lib. vi. c. 2. §. 9. And even letting this paſs, I do not ſee but that the argument would conclude altogether as ſtrong, if not more ſo, in favour of the common reading, על כנף, as of the newly diſcovered one. For it cannot be denied, that כנף may well ſignify *a Wing* or *Outbuilding*; and ſuppoſing Joſephus to have read, *the abomination of the deſolator ſhall* be על כנף, *upon the wing*, (meaning the tower *Antonia*) *which he ſhall cut off*, might he not equally have inferred the quadrangular form of the temple from the wing thus ſaid to be cut off from the main body of the building, as if it had been expreſſed, with ſomewhat leſs propriety perhaps, that the main body of the building ſhould be cut off from the wing? Not that I think there is much ſtreſs to be laid upon the conjecture either way, how ſatisfactory ſoever it may appear to the learned Profeſſor. — But having mentioned the poſſibility of כנף being taken to denote the tower *Antonia*, as the *wing* of the temple, I cannot help ſubmitting to the reader a thought which has ſuggeſted itſelf, not without ſome appearance of plauſibility. It has been obſerved above, that our Saviour's quotation may well be underſtood as not neceſſarily including more of the paſſage before us than the two words שיקוץ משמם, *the abomination of deſolation*; and, for all that appears to the contrary, our Saviour and the prophet Daniel may have deſigned the ſame appearance indeed, but in different places, and

dated.

dated. And here the chief difficulty will be removed, if we can once aſcertain the ſubject or nominative, which precedes the verb תתך, *ſhall be poured*. This, I am perſuaded, is no other than the noun כלה, *an utter conſumption*, or *full end*; the particle עד, which is conſtructed with it as a prepoſition in all the ancient verſions, being rather to be taken as a mere expletive, or at leaſt adverbially for *omnino*, *penitus*, *even unto*, or *nothing ſhort of*, without affecting the regimen of the noun which follows it. Noldius produces inſtances of the like uſage in Iſa. xxxiii. 23. Job iv. 5. xi. 7. to which, I think, may be added 1 Sam. ii. 5. 1 Chro. xii. 40. Job xxv. 5. Hag. ii. 20. and many others. The paſſage therefore may be thus rendered, *And an utter end, even a ſpeedy one, ſhall be poured upon the deſolated.* Or, without making much alteration in the ſenſe, ועד may be taken conjunctively for *even until*, as limiting a time for the continuance of *the abomination of deſolation* in the ſituation before-

at different times. What then, if without prejudice to the notion that our Saviour had in view the near approach of the Roman armies under Ceſtius, we here render the words ועל כנף שקוץ משמם literally, *and the abomination of deſolation*, that is, the ſame Roman legions with their idolatrous ſtandards, *ſhall be upon the wing*; and underſtand thereby the lodgment made by them upon the tower *Antonia* at the very time, when Titus is ſaid to have had the firſt intelligence that the daily ſacrifices of the temple had ceaſed a little before; and the final deſtruction of the city and temple followed ſoon after? For my part, I can ſee little other objection to this interpretation, than that the tranſactions of the ſiege are here related beforehand with as much order, as they were afterwards by the Hiſtorian, who had been himſelf an eye-witneſs of the whole.

mentioned;

mentioned; thus, *and the abomination of deſolation ſhall be upon the border*, EVEN UNTIL *an utter end, and that a ſpeedy one, ſhall be poured upon the deſolated* *. As for the word נחרצה, its ſignification has already been determined in the preceding verſe, and for the reaſons there given we render it *haſtened*, or *ſpeedy*; beſides that it is ſo rendered by the Seventy, the Syriac, and the Latin Vulgate, Iſai. x. 22. where it occurs joined with כלה, as in the preſent inſtance, כלה נחרצה, *conſummatio abbreviata*, Gr. συντετμημενον; and even our tranſlators themſelves have given the ſame turn to an expreſſion of a ſimilar form, כלה אך נבהלה, *He ſhall make* EVEN A SPEEDY RIDDANCE *of all them that dwell in the land.* Zeph. i. 18. Enough has been already obſerved of the extraordinary haſte in which the war was precipitated to a concluſion [a]. And as to the final iſſue of it, we may compare what is here ſaid with our Saviour's prediction, Luke xxi. 24. which hiſtory informs us was completely verified in the event. *And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations, and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gen-*

* See עד uſed in this manner with a future verb, Gen. xxxviii. 11. Prov. vii. 23. Hoſ. x. 12. It is not clear whether our laſt Engliſh tranſlators of the Bible did not underſtand עד in this ſenſe, as may be ſeen from the pointing with which this ſentence is read p. 53. but it is certainly ſo taken in the old Engliſh verſion of Queen Elizabeth's time, which reads, *even untill the conſummation determined ſhall be poured upon the deſolate.*

[a] P. 52, 53.

tiles be fulfilled. — One thing more I would chooſe to remark, which is, that a peculiar ſtreſs ſeems to be laid on the laſt word, שומם, *the deſolated*; by which thoſe appear to be marked out, who having been all along harraſſed and worn down by the miſeries of the war, and eſpecially of the ſiege, were doomed finally to periſh and be cut off at the cloſe of all; in contradiſtinction ſeemingly to that part of the nation, who at the beginning of the verſe were ſaid to have been under the protection of a ſpecial covenant, and thereby exempted from the general ruin. This latter was the caſe of the inhabitants of the mountainous parts of *Galilee* and *Peræa*, who, not having joined in the revolt from the Romans, were therefore ſafe, together with the better ſort of the nation, who had fled thither from the ſouthern parts of Judea properly ſo called *. This diſtinction our Saviour alſo hath moſt expreſsly noticed in the following words of his prediction, *Then ſhall two be in the field; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. Two women ſhall be grinding at the mill; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left* [a].

And thus have I endeavoured to trace out and explain the true import and meaning of this extraordinary viſion; following with impartiality, and, I truſt, with due ſobriety, the lights that have been held forth to me; ſome of which being of new diſcovery may have

* See p. 56.

[a] Matt. xxiv. 40, 41.

been

been the cauſe why the matter has hitherto been differently apprehended; but if a proper uſe ſhall appear to have been made of theſe, it may encourage our hopes of further benefit in the illuſtration of other difficult parts of Scripture, to be derived from thoſe larger communications of the ſame kind, which we are taught ſhortly to expect. It may not be amiſs to give the tranſlation of the whole prophecy at one view, according to the foregoing amendments.

SEVENTY, SEVENTY YEARS OF REST (or, DESOLATION) HAVE BEEN UPON THY PEOPLE AND UPON THY HOLY CITY, TO CHECK THE REVOLT, AND TO PUT AN END TO SINS, AND TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR INIQUITY, AND TO BRING AGAIN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ANCIENT TIMES, AND TO SEAL (that is, AUTHENTICATE) THE DIVINE ORACLE AND THE PROPHET, AND TO ANOINT (that is, SANCTIFY ANEW) THE MOST HOLY THINGS.

AND THOU SHALT KNOW AND UNDERSTAND, THAT FROM THE GOING FORTH OF A DECREE TO REBUILD JERUSALEM UNTO THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE SHALL BE SEVENTY AND SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO YEARS; IT SHALL BE REBUILT, STILL ENLARGING ITSELF, AND BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONSIDERABLE, EVEN AMIDST TIMES OF DISTRESS.

AND AFTER THE TIMES SEVENTY SEVEN AND THREESCORE AND TWO, MESSIAH SHALL CUT OFF FROM BELONGING TO HIM BOTH THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY; THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME SHALL DESTROY THE PEOPLE; AND THE CUTTING OFF THEREOF SHALL BE WITH A FLOOD; (that is, A HOSTILE INVASION) AND UNTO THE END OF A WAR CARRIED ON WITH RAPIDITY SHALL BE DESOLATIONS.

BUT HE SHALL CONFIRM A COVENANT (or MAKE A FIRM COVENANT) WITH MANY FOR ONE WEEK; AND IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK HE SHALL CAUSE THE SACRIFICE AND MEAT OFFERING TO CEASE; AND THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION SHALL BE UPON THE BORDER; (that is, ENCOMPASSING AND PRESSING CLOSE UPON THE CITY AND THE TEMPLE) AND AN UTTER END, EVEN A SPEEDY ONE, (or, EVEN UNTIL AN UTTER END, AND THAT A SPEEDY ONE) SHALL BE POURED UPON THE DESOLATED.

A moſt aſtoniſhing prediction, in which the future fortunes of a people, carried on and continued through a courſe of more than ſix hundred years together, marked with a ſucceſſion of ſtriking and extraordinary incidents, and at length terminating in a final diſſolution,

tion, are deſcribed beforehand with ſuch wonderful preciſion and circumſtantiality, that to a perſon not well verſed in the proofs of ſcripture authenticity it might well appear (what ſome enemies to revelation have groundleſsly charged upon this and other ſcriptural prophecies beſides) to have been invented after the things had happened, which are pretended to be foretold in it! Happily however we are enabled undeniably to evince the contrary; not only becauſe we are provided with abundant evidence of the book, which contains this prophecy, and of the prophecy itſelf, having been extant long before the times which are therein referred to, and of its having been ſtill in the keeping of thoſe, whoſe avowed enmity to the Chriſtian cauſe muſt have been an effectual bar againſt any attempt of impoſture to favour it; but alſo becauſe even Chriſtians themſelves have not, according to the preſent ſuppoſition at leaſt, been hitherto generally acquainted with the true value of its contents, ſo as to apply them with all due advantage. Authenticated then as it is, and illuſtrated, if truly, according to the foregoing explanation, it muſt be conſidered as a moſt ſtrong corroborating teſtimony of the truth of our holy religion, and of the divine power and authority of its great author. — Some perhaps may be diſſatisfied at not finding any longer in this prophecy the proof of that particular article of Chriſtian faith, which has commonly been underſtood to be witneſſed in it. Far, very far am I from wiſhing

to

to weaken any part of that evidence, which is afforded us for the confirmation of any of thoſe ſacred truths, which are moſt ſurely believed among us. But if the doctrine of our Saviour's death for the ſins of mankind be not here to be met with in reality, as I am perſuaded it is not, who can be juſtly blamed for acknowledging the truth? Nor do I think the credibility of the doctrine is in the leaſt degree ſhaken or affected by the want of ſuch an atteſtation. For if the illuſtration of this prophecy tends to the confirmation of the goſpel truth in general, it tends alſo to the confirmation of every particular article which that goſpel teaches. And I know not what it doth teach, if it doth not teach with the greateſt plainneſs and perſpicuity, that *Chriſt Jeſus died for our ſins*[a], and *not for his own*[b], *the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God*[c]. This at leaſt I am certain of, that if any one ſhould be ſo weak and unſettled in the faith, as to remain unconvinced by the expreſs declarations made on this head by our Saviour and his apoſtles, he would hardly be perſuaded by any additional teſtimony, that could poſſibly be derived from the words of this prophecy.

[a] Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. i. 4. Heb. i. 3. ix. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 24. [b] 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. iv. 15. vii. 26, 27. 1 Pet. ii. 22.
[c] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

ONE word or two more let me add, before I conclude, with reſpect to the purpoſe and deſign of revealing this heavenly viſion. Some perſons have ſeemed to imagine, and have argued upon the ſuppoſition, that the matter of this prophecy muſt needs be conſidered as of a favourable kind, and not to contain threats of evil, as we ſee it does, becauſe it was delivered to Daniel in anſwer to his prayer, and by way of conſolation to him, at the ſame time that he is declared to be in eſpecial favour with God *. But I ſee not the leaſt ground for ſuch a preſumption. All, I think, that can reaſonably be concluded from its having been granted in conſequence of Daniel's prayer, is what I have already inferred at the beginning of this inquiry; namely, that it might fairly be expected to have been in point, or at leaſt not foreign to the matter of the ſupplication. And upon this footing it was ſurely a diſtinguiſhing mark of God's great favour towards him, that he ſhould be thought worthy to participate of the divine counſels at firſt hand, of what nature ſoever thoſe counſels were; and ſhould be employed as an inſtrument of conveying that knowledge to others. The beginning of the viſion indeed ſounded favourably; but the end was exceedingly harſh and bitter; and undoubtedly muſt have appeared ſo to one, who felt for his country ſo affectionately as the pro-

* *Michaelis Epiſt. ad D. J. Pringle*, p. 61, 62.

phet

phet Daniel did. But what then? Muſt God alter and reverſe the order of his decrees, or even ſuppreſs and keep out of ſight the afflictive part of them, when it was otherwiſe convenient to make them known, for fear of adding to the ſorrows of this good man? Or when do we find him ſo intemperately laviſh of the miraculous interpoſitions of his providence, as to make ſuch high and important diſcoveries of his future deſigns, merely to gratify the curioſity of, or impart ſome temporary conſolation to, an importunate individual, how exemplary or how acceptable ſoever for his piety? — Again; as little reaſon is there to ſuppoſe that this revelation was given by way of ſeaſonable and friendly warning to the Jewiſh nation, in proſpect of exciting them to repentance. In other places they are earneſtly called upon to reform their miſdoings, are ſhewn the neceſſary conſequences of their perſiſting in wilful diſobedience, the judgments and the promiſes of God are conditionally held forth to them, and no means left untried to revive in their minds a ſenſe of duty, whenever it ſeemed to decay or loſe ought of its proper influence among them. But in Daniel's predictions we ſee for the moſt part no condition annexed; all is abſolute, and ſimply declarative, and moſt certainly to be performed in its ſeaſon; doubtleſs becauſe God, who foretold the evils, foreſaw at the ſame time the provocations that would infallibly lead to them. A warning however we may ſafely conclude was intended, but not to them whoſe fate was inevitably pronounced,

but

but to others in ſucceeding ages, to convince them that all this was not the effect of blind chance, but that the counſel of the Almighty had planned it, and his right hand brought it to paſs; and to engage them for their own benefit to attend to and conſider theſe diſpenſations of his providence. *All theſe things happened unto them for enſamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*[a]. Happy if we duly apply the admonition, and ſuffer it to have its proper effect and influence upon our conduct! The Chriſtian Church hath long ſince ſtept into the place of the Jewiſh nation, and is become, what that was of old, the peculiar object of God's attention and eſpecial providence. It hath partaken in a very large degree of the bounteous riches of his grace; on ſome occaſions and in ſome meaſure it hath alſo been viſited with judgments, and experienced the rod of his afflicting hand. But has it, or to ſpeak leſs generally, has that reformed part of it eſtabliſhed in theſe kingdoms, and which once groaned under the yoke of worſe than Babyloniſh ſervitude, from which we are now happily delivered, have we learned wiſdom from his corrections, or been influenced to love and obey him as we ought, in return for the bleſſed privileges of goſpel light and liberty ſo graciouſly reſtored to us? If this hath not been the caſe hitherto, (and too true, I fear, it is, that it hath

[a] 1 Cor. x. 11.

not) let us take warning betimes. For if God ſpared not the objects of his ancient adoption and favour, let us take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not us. As yet it is hoped that the irrevocable ſentence of condemnation is not gone forth againſt us; and God forbid it ever ſhould! But if we would avoid being held forth in our turn as a ſpectacle of his national vengeance, let us make haſte to avert it by our national repentance. And in this ſalutary work let us remember it to be the duty of every individual among us to take his ſeparate ſhare, and to labour in the reformation of what is amiſs in himſelf; for by this only can the general reformation be effected. And to this ſurely we can want no other motive to incline us, than the conſideration of the general weal, and the love we each of us feel for our religion and country. But we have this further encouragement in our favour, that however our pious endeavours may turn out with reſpect to the public, they will in no caſe be unavailing or loſt to ourſelves. Even taking the worſt that can poſſibly happen, the providence of God, as is exemplified abundantly in the inſtance before us, will be ever watchful for the preſervation of his faithful ſervants, and will find a way for them to eſcape and be happy, even amidſt the general conflagration and perdition of the ungodly.

THE END.

ADDENDA.

After the laſt Note at the bottom of page 14. add — The following may ſerve among many other inſtances of the repetition of the ſame word by way of ſtrengthening the emphaſis. Exod. xxxiv. 6. Jud. v. 22. Iſai. xxxviii. 11, 19. li. 12. lvii. 19. Jer. vii. 4. viii. 11. Ezek. xxi. 9, 27, 28. Matt. v. 37. Rev. xiv. 8. Nor is the figure unknown to heathen writers. Thus *Sophocles* in *Ajax* —

ΠΟΛΥΝ ΠΟΛΥΝ δαρον τε με
Κατειγετ' αμφι Τροιαν
Χρονον·

And *Virgil* . . —— *DEUS, DEUS ille, Menalca.*

And *Salluſt in B. Catil.* — — *En ILLA, ILLA, quam ſæpe optaſtis, libertas!* Not to mention inſtances of the like nature, which abound in our own language — The application of the emphaſis in the preſent caſe ſeems deſigned to expreſs the immutability of God's purpoſe with reſpect to the time allotted by him, as for the duration, ſo alſo for the removal of thoſe calamities, which the prophet Daniel had taken ſo much to heart.

BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Blayney, Benjamin,

A dissertation by way of inquiry into the true import and application of the vision related Dan. IX. ver. 20 to the end usually called Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks

Oxford 1775

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